

Université de Montréal

**The Intercultural Communication Competence of Canadian Diplomats:
A Dialectic Approach**

Par

Nathalie Gesnot-Dimic

Département de communication

Faculté des arts et des sciences

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Présenté par

Nathalie Gesnot-Dimic

A été évalué par un jury composé des personnes suivantes

Stephanie Fox

Président-rapporteur

Kirstie McAllum

Directrice de recherche

David Grondin

Membre du jury

Résumé

Au Canada, les diplomates de carrière sont mutés à l'étranger tout au long de leur carrière. En raison de la nature intrinsèquement internationale et interculturelle du travail diplomatique, des compétences en communication interculturelle (CCI) sont essentielles aux diplomates. Pourtant, les études consacrées à la CCI et à l'expatriation ont négligé cette population, utilisant plutôt des échantillons de voyageurs, d'expatriés du secteur privé ou d'étudiants en échange universitaire. Partant du principe que les diplomates sont des expatriés particuliers en raison de leur situation spéciale à l'étranger, cette étude a pour objectif de remédier à cette lacune dans la littérature. Utilisant une méthodologie qualitative, cette étude examine les expériences d'affectation à l'étranger de diplomates canadiens à travers l'optique conceptuelle de la CCI. Les données ont été recueillies à travers des entretiens individuels semi-structurés avec douze diplomates canadiens, et analysées selon une approche dialectique combinant les principes de la théorie de la dialectique relationnelle et du postmodernisme. L'analyse a identifié cinq tensions dialectiques, trois au niveau individuel et deux au niveau organisationnel. Ce mémoire contribue à la littérature interculturelle en théorisant la CCI en tant que concept organisationnel, en repensant la compétence en tant que gestion durable de dialectiques et en réfléchissant la CCI sur une échelle de temps de moyen terme.

Mots clés : Compétence en communication interculturelle, Diplomatie, Dialectiques, Expatriation, Compétence organisationnelle en communication interculturelle

Abstract

In Canada, career foreign service employees are posted abroad on a rotational basis throughout their career. Because of the inherently international and intercultural nature of diplomatic work, intercultural communication competencies are essential for diplomats. Yet, studies examining intercultural communication competence (ICC) and expatriation have neglected this population, instead employing samples of sojourners, private sector expatriates or exchange students. Based on the premise that diplomats are particular expatriates because of their special circumstances abroad, this study aims to remedy this gap in the literature. Using qualitative methodology, this study examines the experiences on posting of Canadian diplomats through the conceptual lens of ICC. Data was collected through individual semi-structured interviews with twelve Canadian diplomats on posting, and analyzed through a dialectical approach combining tenets of relational dialectics theory and postmodernism. Analysis identified five dialectical tensions, three which interplayed at the individual level and two which interplayed at the organizational level. This thesis contributes to the intercultural literature by theorizing ICC as an organizational-level construct, by re-thinking competence as the sustainable management of dialectics, and by considering ICC on a meso-time scale.

Keywords: Intercultural Communication Competence, Diplomacy, Expatriation, Dialectics, Organizational Intercultural Communication Competence

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List of Acronyms

CAB: Cognitive Affective Behavioral

CAQDAS: Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software

CBS: Canada-Based Staff

CFSI: Canadian Foreign Service Institute

CIL: Centre for Intercultural Learning

DFATD: Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development

GAC: Global Affairs Canada

HOM: Head of Mission

HRQOL: Health-Related Quality of Life

IC: Intercultural Competence

ICC: Intercultural Communication Competence

LES: Locally Engaged Staff

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

“The world of high-stakes international diplomacy can be rough and tumble, but it’s more often than not a procession of suits and summits, protocol sessions and photo ops,” writes Douglas Brinkley (2013, para. 1), professor at Rice University. Or is it? My interest in intercultural communication and my initial idea for this thesis stem from my own upbringing. I am what is colloquially known as a *Diplobrat*: a child of diplomats. I followed my parents overseas on international assignments for most of my childhood, as they served in various Canadian embassies and delegations abroad. Growing up, moving to a different country every four or five years seemed like a fact of life.

A common stereotype of the Foreign Service is that of “diplomats living in palatial mansions, champagne-sipping ambassadors, striped pants cookie-pushers, spoiled whining spouses, and a cushy [...] lifestyle complete with servants” (Hughes, 2004, p. 216). I must admit, it is a stereotype I used to share to some extent about my parents’ line of work. Perhaps not the “spoiled whining spouses” part, but certainly the champagne-sipping and privileged lifestyle portion. (But that *could* be because my only two expatriation experiences at the time were Washington and Paris.) Only later in life, as my parents left on their first assignment abroad without me since I left home, did I really start considering the difficulties associated with my parents’ positions and the challenges of living abroad as a diplomat, an official representing one’s country abroad.

1.1 The Challenge of Intercultural Communication in Diplomacy

Misunderstandings have occurred in situations of intercultural communication since time immemorial. And despite its often-rigid protocol, diplomatic work is no exception. Korshuk (2004) recounts an amusing episode which occurred in XVII century France: the

Persian ambassador, visiting the court of Louis XIV, refused to arrive “as a prisoner in a closed carriage, surrounded by armed warriors” (p. 405), and a special derogation to the protocol had to be made to allow him to arrive on horseback. He also “found it hard to come to grips with the idea that the beautiful woman who introduced herself to him (Angelique) was not a present the king had sent him as a sign of good will,” but was in fact the king’s favourite mistress (p. 405).

Despite over 50 years of research in the field of intercultural communication, misunderstandings in international diplomacy still often occur. Just last year, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu was criticized for serving Japanese Prime Minister Abe dessert in a shoe during an official meal. Officials from both countries deemed the haute-cuisine decision “insensitive,” disrespectful, and shocking. “There’s no culture in the world in which you put shoes on the table. What was the distinguished chef thinking?” remarked a Japanese diplomat to the press (Egash, 2018, para. 7). In the midst of the controversy, it was revealed that the shoe was in fact not a shoe, but a sculpture in the shape of a shoe by renowned designer Tom Dixon. Alas, the damage was done.

While intercultural blunders during official events might receive more media attention, they are also frequent in career diplomats’ day-to-day work. In fact, Al Mulla (1988) found that “[cross-cultural] misunderstanding, misinterpretation and misjudgement characterize[s] [...] career diplomats’ activities” (p. iv).

1.2 The Challenge of Work-Expatriation

Intercultural misunderstandings are even more likely because by the very nature of their work, diplomats are required to interact with individuals of various cultural backgrounds. For instance, in Canada, career foreign service employees serve abroad according to a rotational

pattern throughout the span of their career, as a condition of employment (National Joint Council, 2019a). These assignments abroad are colloquially known as *postings*, that is, “an assignment to an office of the Government of Canada” (National Joint Council, 2019b, para. 3.2.3). A post is “a city, community, or other geographic locality in which a ‘mission’ is situated” (National Joint Council, 2019a, para. 31). These postings are “normally for a period of 12 months or more,” and can last up to 5 years (National Joint Council, 2013, para. 3.1.1.a).

However, research on work-related expatriation has shown that assignments abroad can be risky endeavors. Expatriate assignment failure has been associated with various factors, including the inability to adapt to the physical or cultural landscape of the host country, the lack of adequate intercultural communication skills, and the adjustment difficulties of accompanying family members (Kealey, MacDonald & Vulpe, 2004; Littrell et al., 2006). Defining failure as premature return from abroad, the scientific literature from the 80s and 90s has often cited the failure rate as ranging anywhere from 20% to 50% (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Deshpande & Viswesvaran, 1992; Mendenhall, Dunbar & Oddou, 1987). Scholars also estimated that half of those who do not return early function below their normal level of productivity (Black, 1988; Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Deshpande & Viswesvaran, 1992). There has, however, been substantial debate among scholars regarding the definition of international assignment failure, and on its actual prevalence. The empirical validity of the above statistics has since been challenged by Harzing (1995), who warns that “the persistent myth of high expatriate failure rates [...] seems to have been created by massive (mis)quotations of three articles” (p. 457). A follow up study by Forster (1997) found the failure rates among UK employees to be in fact “very low” (p. 414), around 8% on average. Research by Insch and Daniels (2002) even points to a “decline in premature departures from foreign assignments” (p. 39) since the 80s, at least for U.S. companies. Few recent statistics exist.

Unfortunately, when studying expatriation, scholars have often employed a study sample comprised of private sector workers, specifically expatriate managers working for multinational companies (MNCs) (e.g., Black, 1988; Deshpande & Viswesvaran, 1992; Forster, 2000; Ko & Yang, 2011; Mendenhall, Dunbar, & Oddou, 1987; Morris & Robie, 2001; Osman-Gani & Rockstuhl, 2009; Puck, Kittler, & Wright, 2008; Qin & Baruch, 2010; Selmer, 2005; Waxin & Panaccio, 2005). In fact, few scholars have studied the challenges faced by diplomats on post (for exceptions, see Anderson, 2001; Bolewski, 2008; Cohen, 1987; Groeneveld, 2008; Kealey, MacDonald, & Vulpe, 2004; Mustafayeva & Schnitzer-Skjønsberg, 2016; Neumann, 2005; Patel et al., 2006; Selmer & Fenner, 2009; Sofer, 1997).

Studies which have focused on the diplomatic corps have yielded results which seem to contradict the ‘cushy life abroad’ stereotype. In Fliege et al.’s (2016) study of German Federal Foreign Office employees, the authors found that diplomats reported a *worse* health-related quality of life (HRQOL) score compared to the general population, in all subdomains of the measure: physical symptoms, and role, emotional and social functioning (p. 14). The HRQOL measure is based on the World Health Organization’s definition of health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well being” (World Health Organization, 2006, in Fliege et al., 2016, p. 19). McDougall (1981) found analogous results in a survey-study on Canadian Foreign service personnel, according to which “70 per cent of employees and 65 per cent of spouses find life at post more stressful than life in Ottawa,” and moreover “80 per cent of employees and 72 per cent of spouses consider life for families at post to be more stressful” (p. 142).

Other studies have focused on the challenges *women* in the diplomatic service faced abroad. Linse (2004) investigated the issue through semi-structured interviews with 11 women of various origins serving overseas for their governments. She found two main themes. First,

women expressed difficulty in dealing with chauvinistic men in the workplace (which is not limited to the diplomatic community, however) and having to “work harder than their male counterparts” (p. 262) to advance professionally as quickly as men did. Second, her participants found balancing family and career expectations challenging, as men are traditionally expected to be the bread winners and their wives the dependents, not the other way around. “If I were to give advice to a young woman thinking of becoming a diplomat, I would say that you need to choose between family and career,” one participant reported (p. 258). These findings were largely corroborated by Marriott OBE (2017) in her survey study of 36 members of the UK’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), who found four main categories of challenges faced by female FCO representatives: (1) navigating cultural norms; (2) building trust and relationships; (3) working in male-dominated environments; and (4) maintaining a personal life (p. 122).

1.3 Diplomats as Peculiar Expatriates

This research is based on the premise that because of the special nature of their circumstances abroad, the experience of diplomats on posting is different in certain key aspects from that of private sector expatriates.

Indeed, life abroad as part of a foreign service career is characterized by a loss of privacy and personal choice (McDougall, 1981). As representatives of the Government of Canada, foreign service employees’ conduct and actions abroad are subjected to stronger public scrutiny, and “any adverse perception of their actions may have an effect on Canada’s reputation” (Conduct Abroad Code, 2014, p. 9). As such, they must follow a strict code of ethics to which private sector expatriates may not be subjected. And, this Code does not only apply to the diplomats themselves, but to their “dependents” as well, that is, their spouse and

children who accompany them abroad (p. 4). This code can severely limit their autonomy and can be a source of frustration, while non-compliance with its principles can result in the termination of the assignment abroad (p. 3). For example, depending on the location of the posting, diplomats can be subjected to strict security rules (p. 8-9). They might be forced to live in an enclosed compound and follow a strict curfew, be prohibited from walking in the street or from having their spouse and children accompany them. Even “contact with the local population for other than business purposes is [...] prohibited or restricted” in certain countries (McDougall, 1981, p. 24). Beyond security restrictions, “the HOM [Head of Mission] has the authority to put in place restrictions on the freedom of movement, freedom of association, or freedom to partake in activities or events in the countries of accreditation for Canadian representatives and their dependents, which they must observe” (p. 8-9). The Code also restricts dependents’ freedom abroad. For example, the Code states that dependents who wish to work abroad should “consult the Foreign Service Directives Division or their HOMs, in consultation with the Chief of Protocol and/or the Values and Ethics Division of DFATD¹” (p. 7). As such, as McDougall (1981) eloquently puts it, when on posting “the foreign service lives with the employer twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week” (p. 9).

A second difference stems from the fact that foreign postings are a *condition of employment* for career foreign service employees. This has various consequences, as noted by Fliege et al. (2016). First, whereas in the private sector, “career advancement is an important motive for expatriation,” in the Foreign Service, “career mobility depends on other criteria” (p. 14). Additionally, business expatriates are generally “professionals occupying higher positions and fulfilling strategic functions in a given company,” while for rotational Canada-based Staff (CBS), “all employees from the lowest to the highest service grade are part of the international

¹ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, now renamed as Global Affairs Canada (GAC)

rotation system” (p. 14). Moreover, because they face *repeated* international relocation, returning to the home country might not necessarily feel like “coming home.” I contend that these differences strongly influence the nature of the individual’s experiences and challenges faced abroad.

1.4 Diplomacy as a Site for Studying Intercultural Communication Competence

As such, in this thesis, I seek to understand the experiences of Canadian diplomats on international assignments through the conceptual lens of *intercultural communication competence* (ICC). Indeed, diplomatic work is inherently international, and intercultural communication skills are important for the diplomat on posting. However, the intercultural challenges faced by public service expatriates while on posting are an under-researched area of the available literature on expatriation.

Understanding the intercultural challenges that diplomats face abroad can help us understand how to better prepare them to face these challenges. This would benefit both Global Affairs Canada, Canada’s Foreign Service department, and the communities they work with by enhancing our understanding of effective strategies to approach in-field intercultural challenges, thus promoting fruitful interactions. Conceptually, this would enhance our understanding of ICC by applying the concept to an under-researched population.

This thesis is split into 5 chapters. In chapter 2, I present a detailed review of the literature on the concept of ICC. I review the conceptual implications of the various terms commonly used to refer to ICC, then present the three main models of ICC: the CAB model, processual/developmental models, and relational and contextual models. I conclude the chapter with my research questions. In chapter 3, I describe my research terrain and my research design. I first introduce Global Affairs Canada, explain its mandate, its diplomatic activities, and the

structure of its human resources both in Canada and abroad. I follow with a detailed description of my qualitative methodological approach. I describe the twelve semi-structured interviews and reflect on my position as a semi-insider researcher and on some ethical considerations. Importantly, I describe how through back-and-forth with the data I switched from a thematic analysis firmly entrenched in the interpretive paradigm, to a dialectical approach inspired by relational dialectics theory and postmodernism. In chapter 4, I present my research findings and in chapter 5, I discuss their theoretical and practical implications—conceptualizations of ICC as an organizational and dialectic concept—and propose future research areas.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review and Problematization

Scholars have suggested that intercultural communication skills are important to expatriate workers for successful international assignments (Kealey, MacDonald & Vulpe, 2004; Kealey & Protheroe, 1996): “The globalization of business and the proliferation of intergovernmental and non-governmental contacts involving expatriates makes the need for cross-cultural competencies more important than ever before,” Kealey and Protheroe wrote in 1996 (p. 124). Understanding and measuring intercultural communication competence (ICC), Ruben (1989) argues, enables organizations to (1) explain overseas failures; (2) predict overseas successes; (3) develop personnel selection strategies; and (4) design, implement and test sojourner training and preparation methodologies (p. 230). Yet, although practitioners and researchers agree on the importance of intercultural communication competence for expatriate workers, and for diplomats in particular, it continues to be a nebulous, ambiguous concept. In 1989, Spitzberg already critiqued the “theoretical and terminological morass” (p. 243) that was the state of the research on intercultural communication competence. Nearly thirty years later, Danso (2016) still deplores the “smorgasbord of definitions and conceptualizations” (p. 410) of ICC.

This chapter reviews the different ways in which intercultural communication competence has been defined and conceptualized in the scientific literature. I first nuance the various terminologies and definitions of ICC and propose my own definition of the concept. Then, I introduce the three main approaches to the study of ICC: CAB models, processual models, and contextual and relational approaches. Finally, I examine the literature on diplomatic ICC and present my research questions.

2.1 The Terminology of ICC

There is considerable debate about the appropriate terminology for ICC (Deardorff, 2011). A variety of terms are commonly used in the literature, often interchangeably: *Intercultural Communication Competence* (Collier, 1989; Imahori & Lanigan, 1989; Chen & Starosta, 1996), *Intercultural Competence* (Bird, Mendenhall, Stevens & Oddou, 2010; Deardorff, 2011; Gertsen, 1990; Spitzberg & Chagnon, 2009), *Cross-Cultural Competence* (Lonner, 2013; Wilson, Ward, & Fischer, 2013 in Chiu, Lonner, Matsumoto, & Ward, 2013; Ruben, 1989), *Intercultural Effectiveness* (Abe & Wisemann, 1983; Cushner, 1988; Cui & Van Den Berg, 1991; Cui & Awa, 1992; Gudykunst & Hammer, 1984; Hammer, 1987; Hannigan, 1990), and *Cross-Cultural Effectiveness* (Härtel & Fisher, 2003; Kealey, 1989). However, as each term has different conceptual implications, I argue that three main terminological points should be integrated:

1. On whether to use the terms “intercultural” or “cross-cultural”;
2. On the nuance between “*communication* competence” and “*cultural* competence”.
3. On whether to use the terms “competence” or “effectiveness”.

2.1.1 Intercultural vs. Cross-cultural

While the terms “intercultural” and “cross-cultural” are frequently used interchangeably, they do refer to slightly different phenomenon. A *cross-cultural* study is one “in which researchers compare a particular concept in two or more cultures whose members are having intra-cultural experiences” (Koester & Lustig, 2015, p. 20). On the other hand, an *intercultural* study is concerned with “interaction among people from two or more cultures” (Koester & Lustig, 2015, p. 20). As ICC research is concerned with the latter, I agree with Koester and Lustig (2015) that the term “intercultural” is more appropriate, and I use this term throughout the remainder of the thesis.

2.1.2 Communication Competence vs. Cultural Competence

To understand ICC, it is useful to distinguish the concepts of *communication competence* and *cultural competence* from which the term derives.

Communication competence emphasizes the *communicative* facet of (intercultural) interaction. The term “communicative competence” was born in the field of linguistics. Chomsky (1965) originally coined the term “linguistic competence” to refer to the knowledge and correct use of the rules of grammar of a language (Canale & Swain, 1980). However, scholars (Campbell and Wales, 1970; Hymes, 1972) argued that merely linguistic (grammatical) competence was insufficient to achieve appropriate communication. Rather, speech should also be appropriate in the context in which it is used. This is the view advanced by the Ethnography of Speaking approach to the study of linguistic competence, notably spearheaded by Hymes (1962) and Philipsen (2002), according to which communication is always culturally situated. This means an allocution can be grammatically correct without being contextually or culturally appropriate, in which case it is not competent communication. Therefore, knowledge of the sociocultural rules governing language use is an imperative in order to demonstrate competent communicative behavior. Scholars proposed the term “communicative competence” to refer to this contextually appropriate linguistic conduct (Canale & Swain, 1980). Communicative competence can be defined as:

The ability of an interactant to choose among available communicative behaviors in order that he may successfully accomplish his own interpersonal goals during an encounter while maintaining the face and line of his fellow interactants within the constraints of the situation. (Wiemann, 1977, p. 198)

In contrast, the concept of *cultural competence* (or *intercultural competence*) does not specifically focus on communication behaviors. Let's look at two definitions of cultural competence:

The process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, spiritual traditions, immigration status, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, values, and preserves their dignity. (Danso, 2016, pp. 412-414)

Conduct which is appropriate and effective for the particular cultural identity being adopted at the time in the particular situation. (Collier, 1989, p. 296)

These definitions do not precisely address communication as a culturally appropriate and culturally-embedded message. Rather, they generally situate communication as a relational achievement involving *interaction* with individuals of different cultures. Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) are more explicit in this aspect with their definition of intercultural competence as “the appropriate and effective *management of interaction* between people [of different cultures]” (p. 7, emphasis added).

Additionally, *intercultural competence* is not limited to the study of interpersonal interaction, but also concerns itself with how the individual engages with the various challenges of sojourning abroad. This is evident in Gersten's (1990) or in Taylor's (1994) definitions of intercultural competence: “the ability to function effectively in another culture” (p. 341), and the ability “to effectively accommodate the demands of living in a host culture” (p. 154), respectively. These definitions make room for the study of related intercultural issues, such as adaptation, adjustment, and culture shock.

I conclude that intercultural competence is a broader concept than intercultural communicative competence. While communicative competence focuses on the communicative

behaviors of an interaction, cultural competence broadens the subject of interest to the management of interaction with individuals of the host country as well as other sojourner challenges such as adaptation. Intercultural competence has been studied alongside a variety of related concepts such as *cultural understanding*, *relationship development* (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009), *satisfaction* (Kealey, MacDonald, & Vulpe, 2004), *adaptation* (Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004), *adjustment* (Grove and Torbiörn, 1985; Kealey, MacDonald, & Vulpe, 2004), *cultural intelligence* (Selçuk & Fatih, 2016), *intercultural sensitivity* (Fuller, 2007), *cultural metacognition* (Chiu & Hong, 2005, in Chiu, Lonner, Matsumoto & Ward, 2013), *intercultural transformation* (Kim & Ruben, 1988), *intercultural awareness* (Chen & Starosta, 1998), *intercultural adroitness* (Chen & Starosta, 1996), *cultural humility* (Fisher-Borne, Cain, & Martin, 2015; Danso, 2016) and *cultural flexibility* (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2012).

2.1.3 Competence vs. Effectiveness

The last terminological issue I wish to discuss is the difference between the terms “effectiveness” and “competence,” which have been used somewhat interchangeably by scholars especially in the early research on ICC. They imply different communicational strategies and outcomes.

Effectiveness has been the preferred term for much of the early research on ICC (Hammer, Gudykunst, & Wiseman, 1978; Hawes & Kealey, 1981; Abe & Wiseman, 1983; Gudykunst & Hammer, 1984; Hammer, 1987; Cushner, 1988; Kealey, 1989; Hannigan, 1990; Cui & Van Den Berg, 1991; Cui & Awa, 1992; Härtel & Fisher, 2003). It has been defined as the ability to “produce intended effects through interaction with the environment” (Chen & Starosta, 1996, p. 356). The issue, however, is that an individual might be effective in reaching intended outcomes, without doing so in a culturally *appropriate* manner (Imahori & Laningan, 1989). Because it is not concerned with “normative expectations for the interaction” (Bradford,

Allen, & Beisser, 1998, p. 9), such a goal-oriented approach to intercultural communication can hardly result in an ideal interaction which would be satisfactory for both parties.

Concentrating on the *appropriateness* of the communicative behavior shifts the conceptual focus of ICC from an outcome-oriented approach to a process-oriented approach. This means that instead of aiming to effectively reach a goal, the competent communicator focuses on appropriately managing interactions. Appropriateness is “the ability of an interactant to meet the basic contextual requirements of the situation” (Wiemann & Backlund, 1980, p. 191 in Chen & Starosta, 1996, p. 357).

Under this approach, the *competent* communicator behaves both in an *appropriate* and *effective* manner. Accordingly, researchers have increasingly encouraged that the term “competence” should be used over the term “effectiveness” (Bradford, Allen, & Beisser, 1998), and that the definition of ICC encompass *appropriate* and *effective* communication and behavior in intercultural situations (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009; Deardorff, 2011; Chen & Starosta, 1996; Imahori & Laningan, 1989; Collier 1989; Chen, 1989).

Hence, over the past decade, the term *intercultural communication competence* has gained ground, and has increasingly been endorsed as the ideal terminology by scholars (Martin & Nakayama, 2015). It is the term I will use hereafter in this thesis. Despite a common label, the various definitions catalogued below in Table 1 reflect the still limited consensus as to the appropriate definition of ICC (Chiu, Lonner, Matsumoto, & Ward, 2013; Deardorff, 2015).

Table 1*Overview of Definitions of ICC and of its Related Concepts*

Scholars	Concept	Definition
<i>Wiemann (1977)</i>	Communicative Competence	The ability of an interactant to choose among available communicative behaviors in order that he may successfully accomplish his own interpersonal goals during an encounter while maintaining the face and line of his fellow interactants within the constraints of the situation. (p. 198)
<i>Collier (1989)</i>	Cultural Competence	Conduct which is appropriate and effective for the particular cultural identity being adopted at the time in the particular situation. (p. 296)
<i>Collier (1989)</i>	Intercultural Communication Competence	Conduct perceived to be appropriate and effective for both cultural identities being advanced. (p. 296-297)
<i>Imahori & Lanigan (1989)</i>	Intercultural Communication Competence	The appropriate level of motivation, knowledge, and skills of both the sojourner and the host-national in regards to their relationship, leading to an effective relational outcome. (p. 277)
<i>Cross et al. (1989)</i>	Cultural Competence	A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. ^a
<i>Gertsen (1990)</i>	Intercultural Competence	The ability to function effectively in another culture. (p. 341)
<i>Cui (1989)</i>	Intercultural Effectiveness	The general assessment of a sojourner's ability for effective intercultural communication. ^b
<i>Taylor (1994)</i>	Intercultural Competency	An adaptive capacity based on an inclusive and integrative world view which allows participants to effectively accommodate the demands of living in a host culture. (p. 154)
<i>Chen & Starosta (1996)</i>	Intercultural Communication Competence	The ability to negotiate cultural meanings and to execute appropriately effective communication behaviors that recognize the interactants' multiple identities in a specific environment. (p. 358-359)

(Continued)

Table 1
(Continued)

Scholars	Concept	Definition
<i>Vulpe, Kealey, Protheroe, & MacDonald (2001)</i>	Interculturally Effective/Competent Person	Someone who is able to ‘live contentedly and work successfully in another culture.’ (p. 5)
<i>Spitzberg & Chagnon (2009)</i>	Intercultural Competence	The appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent affective, cognitive and behavioral orientations to the world. (p. 7)
<i>Deardorff (2011)</i>	Intercultural Competence	<i>Effective</i> and <i>appropriate</i> behavior and communication in intercultural situations. (p. 66)
<i>Lonner (2013)</i>	Cross-Cultural Competence	A set of attitudes, knowledge and skills that together form a personal attribute that facilitates smooth and effective communication and interaction with people who are culturally and linguistically different. ^c
<i>Wilson, Ward, & Fischer (2013)</i>	Cross-Cultural Competence	Culture-specific skills required to (a) function effectively within a new cultural context and/or (b) interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. ^c
<i>Chi & Suthers (2015)</i>	Intercultural Communication Competence	The ability to develop meaningful intercultural relations with host and other nationals. (p. 108)
<i>Danso (2016)</i>	Cultural Competence	The process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, spiritual traditions, immigration status, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, values, and preserves their dignity. (p. 412-414) One’s ability to interact seamlessly between cultures purely through the broadening of the person’s awareness, knowledge, and skills. (p. 418)

^a In Danso (2016, p. 412). ^b In Cui & Van Den Berg (1991, p. 228). ^c In Chiu, Lonner, Matsumoto, & Ward (2013, p. 844).

My own definition is inspired by the definitions proposed by Chen and Starosta (1996), Deardorff (2011), Taylor (1994), Gertsen (1990), and Kealey, MacDonald, and Vulpe (2004). This definition of ICC is two pronged, such that by ICC I mean **the ability to (1) effectively and appropriately execute communicative behaviors and manage interactions with individuals of different cultures, and (2) to successfully and contentedly accommodate the demands of living and working in another culture.** To clarify, by *effectively* I refer to the ability to “produce intended effects through interaction with the environment” (Chen & Starosta, 1996, p. 356). *Appropriately* signifies respectfully, in a way which meets “the basic contextual requirements of the situation” (Wiemann & Backlund, 1980, p. 191 in Chen & Starosta, 1996, p. 357) and is mutually satisfactory for both parties.

Having presented my terminological and definitional decisions, in the next section I provide an overview of the main models of ICC found in the literature.

2.2 Models of ICC

Just as there is limited consensus as to the ideal definition of ICC (beyond the appropriate and effective components) (Chiu, Lonner, Matsumoto, & Ward, 2013; Deardorff, 2015), there still is “considerable debate” (Chiu, Lonner, Matsumoto, & Ward, 2013, p. 843) about the components of ICC. There exist countless different models of ICC, none of which seem to be unanimously espoused by intercultural scholars. Models of ICC can be generally divided into three types:

1. Cognitive, Affective and Behavioral (CAB) models;
2. Processual/Developmental models;
3. Contextual/Relational models.

2.2.1 The CAB Model

The **CAB model** has been the dominant paradigm of ICC from the 50s well into the 90s. It aims to identify individual variables predictive of ICC (Gertsen, 1990). According to this model, ICC depends on an individual's *cognitive* (knowledge), *affective* (motivation), and *behavioral* (skills) characteristics (Hammer, 2015). Thus, the higher the individual's degree of intercultural knowledge, motivation, and skill, the higher their ICC (Imahori & Lanigan, 1989). All three facets are required, as Ruben (2015) notes, because "intercultural knowledge and good intentions—without the appropriate behaviors—often lead to other-than-intended outcomes. Conversely, a culturally defined skill set, without more general knowledge, may result in outcomes that are only appropriate in particular cultural settings" (p. 23).

Many variables supposedly predictive of competent intercultural interactions have been proposed since the 60s. I compare several of these "laundry lists" (Hammer, 2015, p. 13) here. Cleveland, Mangone and Adams (1960) proposed four factors that should be considered when selecting personnel for international work. Namely, people working in other cultures should:

1. Be resourceful and buoyant;
2. Have environmental mobility;
3. Possess intellectual curiosity;
4. Have a talent for building institutions.

(in Hammer, Gudykunst & Wiseman, 1978, p. 382)

The "universal communicator" according to Gardner (1962) possesses five characteristics:

1. An unusual degree of integration or stability;
2. Central organization of the extrovert type;
3. A value system which includes the 'value of all men';
4. Is socialized on the basis of cultural universals;

5. A marked telepathic or intuition sensitivity.

(in Hammer, Gudykunst & Wiseman, 1978, p. 383)

For Kleinjans (1972), the “effective intercultural communicator”:

1. Sees people first; representatives of cultures second;
2. Knows people are basically good;
3. Knows the value of other cultures as well as his/her own culture;
4. Has control over his/her visceral reactions;
5. Speaks with hopefulness and candor;
6. Has inner security and is able to feel comfortable being different from other people.

(in Hammer, Gudykunst & Wiseman, 1978, p. 383)

While some of these statements may seem legitimate (e.g., “sees people first”), it is unclear to which degree the above lists are based on empirical research. Furthermore, some of these criteria are vague (e.g., “telepathic or intuition sensitivity”), questionable (e.g., that the “universal communicator” would necessarily be of the “extrovert type”), and seem arbitrary (e.g., be “resourceful and buoyant”, speak “with hopefulness and candor”, or “have a talent for building institutions”).

In research of a more empirical quality, Ruben (1976) sought to identify *behavioral* components of competence. From the literature on communicative competence in the United States, he classified seven communicative behavior dimensions that were “potentially significant” in sojourner intercultural effectiveness:

1. Display of respect;
2. Interaction posture;
3. Orientation to knowledge;

4. Empathy;
5. Role behavior;
6. Interaction management;
7. Tolerance for ambiguity.

(in Hammer, Gudykunst & Wiseman, 1978, p. 383-384)

Gudykunst, Wiseman and Hammer (1977) focused on the *attitude* component of the CAB model. They conceptualized a “third-cultural perspective,” which they contend is at its core. The concept refers to the psychological perspective adopted by sojourners during intercultural encounters, which is neither from their own culture nor from the host’s culture. This perspective, they argue, “facilitates interactions with host culture nationals and increases the sojourner’s attitudinal satisfaction with living in a foreign culture” (in Hammer, Gudykunst & Wiseman, 1978, p. 384). They posit it consists of:

1. Being openminded;
2. Having empathy;
3. Accurately perceiving differences and similarities between one’s own culture and the host culture;
4. Being nonjudgemental;
5. Astutely and noncritically observing their own and other people’s behavior;
6. Establish meaningful relationships with people in the host culture;
7. Being less ethnocentric.

(Hammer, Gudykunst & Wiseman, 1978, p. 384)

In an attempt to empirically investigate components of intercultural effectiveness, Hammer, Gudykunst and Wiseman (1978), collected the ratings of 53 American students who self-

reported being intercultural effective, of 24 “personal ability” traits drawn from the literature.

Three dimensions of intercultural effectiveness were drawn from these ratings:

1. The ability to deal with psychological stress;
2. The ability to communicate effectively;
3. The ability to establish interpersonal relationships.

(p. 382)

Ruben and Kealey (1979) explored the predictive relationship between communicative behaviors in one’s own culture and success in cross-cultural adaptation. The seven variables considered were found to be predictive of success abroad with varying degrees of adequacy. These variables are: empathy, respect, role behavior flexibility, orientation to knowledge, interaction posture, interaction management, and tolerance for ambiguity. The same year, Hawes and Kealey (1979) examined dimensions of “overseas effectiveness” of a group of Canadian technical assistance advisers on international posting. They found it to be composed of three components:

1. *Intercultural interaction*: “the degree of interest and involvement with others from the local culture”;
2. *Task-effectiveness*: “one’s ability to overcome obstacles and satisfactorily accomplish one’s task in the intercultural-mixed work situation”;
3. *Personal adjustment and satisfaction*: “one’s ability to be happy, comfortable, and personally satisfied with the new experience”.

(in Cushner, 1988, p. 161)

Just from this non-exhaustive list of variables, which only presents select research up until the late 80s, the crucial lack of integration, consistency and the conceptual confusion in the CAB model becomes evident (Hammer, 2015). In fact, the CAB model has been called a

“laundry list”, a “buffet” (Hammer, 2015, p. 13), and a “discouraging quagmire of concepts” (Spitzberg, 1989, p. 246) by various scholars. In their review of the literature on intercultural competence, Spitzberg and Chagnon (2009) found over 264 total components of intercultural competence, including 64 cognitive components, 77 affective components and 124 behavioral components.

The CAB model has been weakened by various issues in the literature. First, the sheer number of available variables makes this model’s practical application difficult (Spitzberg, 1989; Hammer, 2015). Second, some scholars have doubted the empirical validity of some components, accusing them of being “derived from a priori conceptions of the authors” rather than from empirical validation (Spitzberg, 1989, p. 243). Third, research findings are frequently difficult to compare because of the different ICC assessment instruments used, and studies are not easily replicable because of poor methodological description (Spitzberg, 1989). Besides, the research instruments used have not necessarily been empirically validated, in which case results were based on limited data and small samples (Spitzberg, 1989).

At a theoretical level, the CAB model assumes that the individual is a fundamentally cognitive, rational and intentional being. However, this assumption largely ignores the subconscious processes that affect ICC, for instance, the fact that the “vast majority of thought and language processing occurs at the subconscious level” (Spitzberg & Chagnon, 2009, p. 35). Moreover, the CAB model only offers a one-sided perspective of competence, one that ignores the contextual and relational factors that shape competent communication. Finally, by emphasizing individuality and personal initiative, the model has been critiqued for its Western-centric view of competence: perhaps more collectivistic cultures might emphasize “empathy, sensitivity and conformity” (Spitzberg & Chagnon, 2009, p. 44). Unfortunately, little effort has

been made to test the cross-cultural generality of the CAB components (Spitzberg & Changnon 2009; Hammer 2015).

Despite these issues, some researchers still believe that “behavior-based approaches [...] offer the best premise for measuring and predicting an individual’s potential for success in another culture” (Kealey, 2015, p. 15). Others “have urged that the predominantly individual-oriented assessments of ICC [...] be expanded to include more relational perspectives” (Chi & Suthers, 2015, p. 115). While still focusing on the individual, processual models depart from CAB models by providing insight into the development of ICC.

2.2.2 Processual/Developmental Models

Processual approaches (also called developmental or transformational approaches) focus on the *process* of ICC acquisition. These approaches contend that, as they live in another culture for extended periods of time, sojourners experience a personal transformation which requires them to look at their world from a different perspective. According to Taylor (1994), it is the sojourner who “is successful at working through and learning from these kinds of cultural experiences [who] has the potential to become interculturally competent within the host culture” (p. 155). Thus, processual approaches seek to identify the universal stages of successful adjustment and adaptation into a new culture (Taylor, 1994, p. 155). Again, a plethora of models exist.

Early developmental models, while not studying ICC *per se*, focused on identifying the stages of culture shock. For example, Oberg’s (1954, 1960) four staged model of cross-cultural adaptation posited that sojourners pass through several psychological stages of adaptation when living abroad: the honeymoon phase; the crisis/culture shock; the recovery phase; and full recovery (in Taylor, 1994; and in Zapf, 1991). An abundance of four-staged models of cultural adjustment exist, each employing various terminological nuances to designate the

stages, such as: exploration, frustration, coping, and adjustment (Kealey, 1978); initial euphoria, hostility, gradual adjustment, and adaptation (Kohls, 1979); elation, frustration, confusion, and confidence (Furnham & Bochner, 1982); or transplantation, uprooting, resettlement, and adjustment (Pfister-Ammende, 1973). A compilation of various models of stages of cultural adjustment can be found in Zapf (1991, p. 108). Adler (1975) was the first to emphasize culture shock as an individual “transitional experience” (p. 15), which he thought of as a “movement of personality and identity to new consciousness of values, attitudes, and understandings” (p. 15). Adler’s five-step model stressed the “*progressive* depth of experiential learning” (p. 16, emphasis added) as individuals move through the following stages: contact; disintegration; reintegration; autonomy; and independence.

Bennett’s (1986) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) conceptualizes the evolution of sojourners’ intercultural sensitivity as they accept the fundamental principle of cultural difference. According to Bennett, intercultural sensitivity develops along a continuum, where the sojourner begins with an ethnocentric appreciation of cultural difference, gradually evolving to an ethnorelative understanding of cultural difference. Bennett defines ethnocentrism as “the experience of one’s own culture as ‘central to reality’” (2004, p. 62), whereas ethnorelativism is “the experience of one’s own beliefs and behaviors as just one organization of reality among many viable possibilities” (2004, p. 62). The DMIS continuum has six stages, with the first three being ethnocentric and the last three being ethnorelative (p. 179):

<u>Ethnocentric</u>	<u>Ethnorelative</u>
Denial of difference	Acceptance of difference
Defence against difference	Adaptation to difference
Minimization of difference	Integration of difference

The empirical validity of five dimensions of the DMIS has been supported by Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman's (2003) Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). Although in the 1986 version of the model, Bennett only spoke of intercultural sensitivity, the model has more recently been linked to the development of intercultural competence (Bennett, 2004; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003).

Taylor (1994) sought to understand the long-term learning process of becoming—or learning to become—interculturally competent. Through in-depth unstructured interviews with interculturally competent Americans, Taylor identified a five-step learning model. Each component is “a series of experiences, events, and/or strategies that each participant passes through or employs in learning to live successfully in the host culture” (p. 160). These are:

1. *Setting the stage*: “What the participant brings to each new intercultural experience that contributes to a context of learning readiness”;
2. *Cultural disequilibrium*: “Periods of dissonance in the participant's life causing stress and intense emotions”;
3. *Cognitive Orientations*: (a) Nonreflective orientation, and (b) Reflective orientation;
4. *Behavioral learning strategies*;
5. *Evolving intercultural identity*.

(p. 162)

Steps 1 and 2 are what he calls “catalyst for change,” or a disorienting dilemma which results from a personal crisis, while steps 3 and 4 reflect different aspects of the learning process, which result from the catalysts for change. The outcome of becoming interculturally competent is a transformed intercultural identity (step 6). Thus, Taylor understands intercultural competency as a “transformative learning process” (p. 154), which he defines as follows: “an

adaptive capacity based on an inclusive and integrative world view which allows participants to effectively accommodate the demands of living in a host culture” (p. 154).

Deardorff’s (2006, 2009) Process Model of Intercultural Competence prides itself in being “the first study to document consensus among leading intercultural experts [...] on aspects of intercultural competence” (IC) (in Deardorff, 2011, p. 66), using the Delphi technique. The Delphi technique is a method of achieving consensus among a group of experts on a specific topic which relies on iterative rounds of group discussion (Hsu & Sandford, 2012). Based on grounded theory, Deardorff’s model posits that IC is an ongoing cyclical process. In this process, an individual’s personal characteristics (attitudes, knowledge/comprehension, and skills) produce both intended internal and external outcomes, which in turn influence the individual’s characteristics, and so on. In this context, Deardorff (2011) defines the general external outcome of IC as “*effective* and *appropriate* behavior and communication in intercultural situations” (p. 66). She notes that critical-thinking skills, the ability to see from others’ perspectives, and certain attitudes such as respect, openness and curiosity play a crucial role in its development.

Processual approaches offer insight into the “how” of ICC acquisition, and as such are a valuable expansion of our understanding of ICC as a CAB construct. Because the process-models are intuitive, they are a useful tool for ICC training, but also for individual self-development, self-reflection and self-diagnosis. However, a first limitation is that they mainly construe ICC acquisition and learning as a linear process with a beginning and an end, rather than as an iterative, cyclical process (Deardorff, 2006, is a notable exception). A second limitation is that, just like the CAB model, the focus is mainly placed on the individual and largely ignores the relational and contextual factors which shape ICC. The models do not investigate what ICC would look like beyond the individual level, at the organizational level

or community level, for instance. In this light, contextual and relationship-oriented approaches are an interesting emerging perspective which seeks to fill in these gaps.

2.2.3 Relational and Contextual Models

Distancing themselves from studies which focus only on individual measures of competence, **contextual and relationship-oriented approaches** represent a more recent approach to the study of ICC. They stress the on-going, dynamic, relational and context-dependent nature of competence (Imahori & Lanigan, 1989).

Imahori and Lanigan (1989) are, to my knowledge, the first scholars to propose a relational model of ICC competence. While they recognize that at an individual level, competence is composed of motivational, knowledge and skills dimensions, they argue that effective communication depends not only on an individual's behavior or skills, but on both partners' characteristics. Because communication is interactive in nature, effective communicational outcomes cannot be reached if one member of the relationship behaves inappropriately. As such, Imahori and Lanigan argue that ICC competence should be "determined by measuring both individuals' competence in a specific relationship" (p. 273). Grounded in interpersonal communication competence theory, their model contends that competent and effective communicational outcomes are those where mutual satisfaction is achieved regarding both parties' needs. In fact, under this conceptualization of ICC competence, "individuals in ideal intercultural relationships would exhibit characteristics of close interpersonal relationships such as intimacy, relational stability and commitment, high degree of interpersonal knowledge, and idiosyncratic rules" (p. 275). In this sense, Imahori and Lanigan define ICC as "the appropriate level of motivation, knowledge, and skills of both the sojourner and the host-national in regards to their relationship, leading to an effective relational outcome" (p. 277). High levels of ICC competence result in a positive experience for both parties.

The concept of communicative synchrony (Kim, 2015) further supports Imahori and Lanigan's (1989) view of ICC as an interactive achievement. Kim (2015) argues that synchrony is a basic dimension of ICC. Synchrony can be defined as the "state of a positive communicative *relationship* formed by the *coming-together of the interactants*' nonverbal behaviors" (Kim, 2015, p. 27, emphasis added). As synchrony is a basic component of ICC and is relationship dependent, then ICC is also relationship dependent.

Another approach to the study of ICC is the dialectical method adopted by Martin and Nakayama (2015). This approach aims to foreground "the forces that constrain communicative choices" (p. 19), and "the inevitable inequities in power relations that are characteristic of all intercultural interactions" (p. 22). This method recognizes that human interaction and relationships are not static, but are a "dynamic, fluid and ongoing process" (p. 18), which depends on complex dynamics of interwoven bipolar forces. The authors have identified six interpersonal dialectics which simultaneously interplay during relational work: individual-cultural; differences-similarities; past/present-future; personal-contextual; privilege-disadvantage; and static-dynamic (p. 18). In this approach, 'context' is not simply another variable of competence, but "is a fluid and dynamic space that is shaped by both local and global forces that constantly reconfigure it" (p. 21). Thus, in this perspective, the study of context is primordial to the study of ICC.

Other approaches go even beyond the dyad-level relational analysis of ICC and focus on wider contextual factors of ICC. At a meso-level of analysis, van Driel and Gabrenya (2012) studied ICC as an organizational construct, examining different ways to quantitatively measure ICC in an organization. At a macro-level of analysis, Chi and Suthers (2015) studied ICC as a dynamic, "socially contextualized construct" (p. 116) which is "distributed throughout members of a community" (p. 108) using social network analysis. Moreover, various scholars (Collier, 2015; Martin, 2015; Fisher-Borne, Cain, & Martin, 2015) have called for a greater

attention to how dynamics of privilege, which are a part of all intercultural encounters, influence ICC and the perception of competence:

Impressions of intercultural competence are always contextually contingent and situated in macro structures; historically influenced and framed by global, political, economic systems, and ideologies such as neoliberalism. Histories related to race, changing laws, and social norms related to immigration and international conflicts, organizational policies around diversity, media representations in film and online news production, all affect how cultural group members are positioned and the extent to which individuals will be viewed as competent. (Collier, 2015, p. 10)

Nevertheless, contextual approaches are still emergent, and much work has yet to be done to achieve a coherent contextual model of ICC with practical applications. It is still unclear what a model of organizational ICC would look like, for example.

This summary does not presume to be an exhaustive review of theories of ICC (cf. Kim & Ruben, 1988; Holmes & O'Neill, 2012; Arasaratnam, Banerjee, & Dembek, 2010). However, it makes clear that ICC still lacks a “coherent theoretical foundation” (Danso, 2016, p. 416), and that satisfactory model of ICC has yet to be developed (Kealey, 2015). This is even more evident in Spitzberg and Changnon’s (2009) extensive review of conceptual models of ICC.

Additionally, some important theoretical issues have yet to be answered in the literature, which have not been addressed in this literature review. For instance, is ICC culture-general or culture-specific? Is ICC a sub-component of interpersonal communicative competence? (Ruben, 1989; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1989). And finally, is ICC a myth? In other words, is it humanly possible to achieve competence in another culture? (Danso, 2016).

But what about diplomats and ICC? In the following section, I provide an overview of the literature on diplomatic ICC and conclude with my research questions.

2.3 Problematization

2.3.1 Diplomats and ICC

What do we know about diplomats' ICC abroad? Not much, it seems. Kealey, MacDonalds and Vulpe (2004) already remarked this fifteen years ago: "very little research has focused on the personal adjustment and professional effectiveness of individuals and families in the diplomatic service," they wrote (p. 438-439). Not much has changed since then: the scientific literature on diplomats' ICC abroad remains quite meagre.

The only studies I have found which link diplomacy and ICC focus on intercultural/cross-cultural training for diplomats from a functionalist perspective. This is not surprising, if one considers that the field of intercultural communication itself was born in the early 1950s out of the need for diplomatic training, as Leeds-Hurwitz (1990) argues. Indeed, "in the 1940s, many persons recognized that American diplomats were not fully effective abroad, since they often did not speak the language and usually know little of the host culture," she writes (p. 264). Hence, the first cross-cultural training programs were designed by the American Foreign Service Institute with the aim of improving its diplomats' abilities to perform in foreign cultural environments (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990).

Thus, the current direction taken by the (scarce) literature on diplomats' ICC seems to be based on the assumption that intercultural communication skills are important for diplomats. "That international diplomats and others managing and working on international projects need to be more knowledgeable and skilled in the art of working across cultures is a given," write, for example, Kealey, MacDonald and Vulpe (2004, p. 431). From this observation (which I

agree with), the literature has sought to answer two questions: (1) What does it mean to be interculturally competent? And, (2) how can we enable individuals to acquire ICC skills?

To understand the different facets of ICC for diplomatic purposes, scholars have systematically extrapolated from the data of studies on ICC mainly using samples of sojourners, private-sector expatriates, and exchange students (Kealey, MacDonald & Vulpe, 2004). Lipponen (2005), is the only study I have found which does examine ICC in a political setting. Specifically, using a CAB perspective, Lipponen examines the ICC of Finnish Members of the European Parliament, using both open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. While this study does depart from studies of ICC on private sector employees, Members of the European Parliament are not diplomats. I argue that the lack of studies on diplomats' ICC stems from the common assumption in the literature that diplomats face the same (or similar) challenges and require the same skills as sojourners—an idea which I have previously argued against.

To investigate how to increase ICC, scholars have turned to the study of intercultural training programs for diplomats. Again, the majority of the literature on intercultural training studies multinational companies and private sector employees. There exists, however, a small niche which explores the design and evaluation of intercultural training programs for diplomats. Zhu (2004), for example, examined the diplomacy training programs in New Zealand and proposed “a model of diplomacy training based on intercultural competence and situated learning” to improve it (p. 418). Similarly, Korshuk (2004) provided a sample training course outline for student diplomats.

Other studies have sought to evaluate the effectiveness of intercultural training programs for diplomats. For example, the Canadian Foreign Service Institute's (CFSI) Centre for Intercultural Learning (CIL), which is “Canada's largest provider of intercultural and

international training services for internationally-assigned government and private sector personnel” (About Us, 2014), has published a handful of reports and research papers evaluating its pre-departure training course (i.e., Kealey, Protheroe, MacDonald & Vulpe, 2003; Centre for Intercultural Learning, 2005, 2010).

2.3.2 Research Questions

I contend that the diplomatic institution exemplifies the search for ICC, because diplomatic work is inherently international, and intercultural communication competencies are important for the diplomat on posting. Unfortunately, very few studies specifically focus on the ICC of the diplomatic corps. ICC has so far been mainly studied on private-sector workers or exchange students, and few scholars have explicitly examined what ICC might look like for diplomats. I propose to fill these gaps by investigating the following two research questions:

RQ1. What intercultural challenges do Canadian diplomats face during posting?

RQ2. How do they communicatively manage these challenges?

With these research questions, I posit that ICC is needed to face intercultural challenges. Accordingly, I suppose that understanding the intercultural challenges that diplomats face abroad and the ways they manage them will give us insight into diplomats’ ICC. In the following chapter, I describe my research terrain and my chosen research methodology.

Chapter 3 – Research Terrain and Methodology

In this chapter, I present my research terrain (Global Affairs Canada) and describe my qualitative methodological approach. I start with a general overview of Global Affairs Canada and describe the structure of its human resources. Then, I present my metatheoretical assumptions on interpretivism and explain why I used semi-structured interviews as my data collection method. Next, I offer some reflexive thoughts on my position as a semi-insider researcher, and on the ethical challenge of maintaining both internal and external confidentiality in such a tightly knit institution. Lastly, I describe my data management and analysis procedure, from transcription to coding. Importantly, I describe how through back-and-forth with the data I switched from a thematic analysis firmly entrenched in the interpretive paradigm, to a dialectical approach inspired by relational dialectics theory and postmodernism.

3.1 Research Terrain

3.1.1 Global Affairs Canada (GAC)

Canada's Foreign Service department, or Canada's "interface at the governmental or official level between Canada and the rest of the world" (McDougall, 1981, p. 63) is *Global Affairs Canada* (henceforth referred to as GAC). The department was originally established by the 1909 Act of Parliament as the Department of External Affairs. Since then, its mandate and operations have expanded (McDougall, 1981; GAC, 2014). Currently, the department's main mandate is fourfold:

- (1) To manage "Canada's diplomatic and consular relations with foreign governments and international organizations, engaging and influencing international players to advance Canada's political and economic interests";

- (2) To manage Canada's "international assistance," with the aim of eradicating global poverty and contributing "to a more peaceful, prosperous and inclusive world";
- (3) To "improve and maintain market access for Canadian businesses";
- (4) To provide consular services to Canadians.

(GAC, 2018, p. 5)

How does this mandate concretely translate into operations? The report *Royal Commission on Conditions of Foreign Service* (McDougall, 1981), a report ordered by then Canadian Prime Minister Pierre E. Trudeau examining the "changes in the conditions of foreign service [in Canada] and on steps that the Government might take to accommodate them" (p. iii), describes the Canadian Foreign Service's international activities in the following terms:

"Operations" means helping to get an aid project off the ground and ensuring that it is implemented; it means finding out what markets exist for Canadian products and exposing Canadian businessmen to them; it means negotiating with governments on behalf of Canadian businesses; it means learning about a country's agricultural and horticultural bases and relating them to Canadian possibilities; it means providing liaison with foreign governments on complex subjects like energy or the law of the sea or communications and broadcasting; it means to a large extent being all things to all men and never ruffling feathers in the process. It also means working in countries with very different ethical standards from ours without running afoul of our own values.

(p. 9)

3.1.2 GAC's Diplomatic Activities

As of 2018, Canada benefits from a vast network of 178 missions in 110 countries (Global Affairs Canada, 2018, p. 7). A *mission* is Canadian government office abroad (National Joint Council, 2013), headed by a Head of mission (HOM). There are eight types of missions,

with the main ones being Embassies, High Commissions, Permanent missions, and Consulates General (for a complete listing of types of missions and their description, see Appendix A). Representing Canada and furthering Canada's interests at these *posts* are diplomats (rotational and mobile Canadian-based staff) on *posting*. Each posting is usually interspersed by a *home assignment* of a few years. However, if a diplomat directly transitions from one posting to another, he/she engages in a *cross-posting*. Every post is rated on a *hardship scale* from 0 to 5. The higher the post hardship rating, the more benefits/compensations (ex: Post Differential Allowance) the diplomat is entitled to while on post (GAC Technical Assistance Unit, 2018; see Table 2 for an example of hardship ratings).

Table 2
Example Hardship Ratings as of February 2018
 (adapted from GAC Technical Assistance Unit, 2018)

Hardship Rating	Example Posts
0	Singapore (Singapore) Paris (France) Riga (Latvia)
1	Dubai (United Arab Emirates) Windhoek (Namibia) Hong-Kong (China)
2	San José (Costa Rica) Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) Kiev (Ukraine)
3	Sofia (Bulgaria) Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) Kafr El-Sheikh (Egypt)
4	Bogotá (Colombia) Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) Phnom Penh (Cambodia)
5	Kabul (Afghanistan) Hohhot (China) Bangui (Central African Republic)

3.1.3 GAC's Human Resources

As of March 2017, GAC managed a workforce of 11,269 employees. GAC's workforce is divided into three categories:

- 1) Non-Pooled (non-rotational) Canada Based Staff;
- 2) Pooled (rotational and mobile) Canada Based Staff; and,
- 3) Locally Engaged Staff.

(GAC – Office of the Chief Audit Executive, 2017)

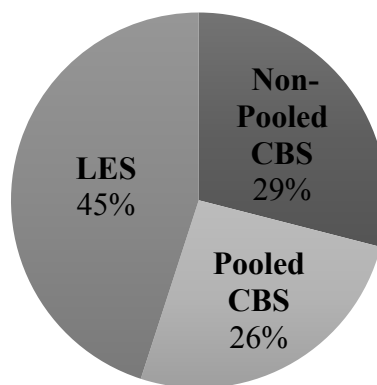


Figure 1
Proportion of CBS and LES in GAC's Human Resources

Canada Based Staff (CBS) are Canadian nationals recruited by GAC in Ottawa. They represent 55% of GAC's workforce (6,252 employees). Rotational and mobile CBS are posted abroad and have diplomatic status (diplomatic passport) when posted. In missions, they occupy the higher-up, managerial positions of the organizational chart. Non-pooled CBS remain in Ottawa, although they can be posted abroad if they wish (GAC – Office of the Chief Audit Executive, 2017).

Conversely, *Locally Engaged Staff* (LES) are locally recruited abroad by the Missions. This does not necessarily mean to say that they are foreign employees: they might be local nationals, bi-national or Canadian expatriates recruited locally. However, they do not have diplomatic status nor are they rotational. They “perform office and household operating and

maintenance functions at missions” (GAC, 1991, para. 2; GAC, 2019a). They represent 45% of the departmental workforce (5,017 employees) (GAC – Office of the Chief Audit Executive, 2017).

In the *Royal Commission on Conditions of Foreign Service* (McDougall, 1981), the average foreign service worker as of 1981 was described as follows:

A 41 year-old married man with 13 years of service. He was likely serving abroad and had a 50 per cent chance of being at a hardship post. He was a bilingual anglophone, had taken some post-graduate studies, and had likely been recruited directly from university, although he could have come from another federal government department. (McDougall, 1981, p. 116).

Moreover, the report states the average foreign service family “had 3.3 members including the employee, spouse and dependent children,” and, “although the average spouse abroad was not working, one out of every four was employed” (p. 116). Few recent statistics on GAC human resources are publicly available. However, available statistics do indicate that as of March 2018, the average CBS employee was 43.8 years old. Additionally, 56% of the CBS were female, and 59% of the CBS’s first official language was English (Global Affairs Canada – Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2018; see Figures 2 and 3).

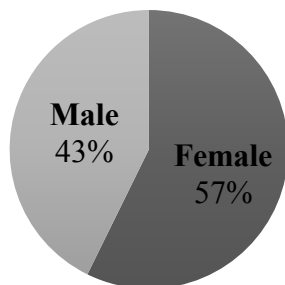


Figure 2
Canada-Based Staff by Gender

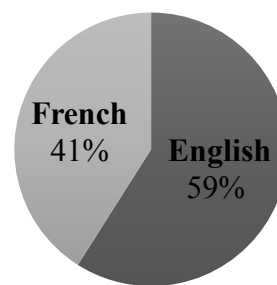


Figure 3
Canada-Based Staff by First Official Language

To examine the challenges faced by the diplomatic workforce abroad, using a qualitative methodology presents various advantages. It complements pre-existing quantitative data by enabling the key stakeholders to describe the experiences that they deem meaningful. Moreover, it gives the researcher access to the participant's perspective of the problem: personal accounts of intercultural challenges and how they overcame them. As such, new interpretations of problems and strategies or solutions can emerge (Gucciardi, Gordon & Dimmock, 2009). In the following section, I present my methodological approach, from data collection to analysis.

3.2 Methodological Approach: Data Collection

3.2.1 Research Methodology and Paradigm

My research follows a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research is particularly suited for my field of inquiry because it “seek[s] answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 8). It involves the study of various empirical materials (verbal and textual) “that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3-4).

The interpretive paradigm guided my reasoning throughout the design of this research up until my second-level coding, at which point I switched to a dialectical (constitutive) perspective to better grasp my data, as I explain later. The interpretive or constructivist paradigm subscribes to the view that there is not a single truth or reality “out there,” patiently awaiting to be uncovered (or measured) by the researcher. Instead, “both reality and knowledge are [socially] [co-]constructed and reproduced through communication, interaction, and practice” (Tracy, 2013, p. 40). Accordingly, the researcher does not strive to exactly ‘mirror reality,’ or what ‘there *is*.’ Nor does she seek to identify and measure cause and effect

mechanisms and variables as in quantitative positivist research paradigms (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Rather, the researcher attempts to understand, interpret, and accurately describe the participants' experience and perception of their own realities. In this way, interpretive work is inherently value laden and subjective (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011).

3.2.2 Data Collection Method: Semi-Structured Interviews

I chose to interview my participants. Interviews are purposeful discussions, where the researcher inquires about relevant topics with the objective of collecting descriptive data in the participants' own words (Carruthers, 1990, p. 64; Fylan, 2005). There are three main interview styles in social science research: unstructured, semi-structured, and structured (Carruthers, 1990). In *unstructured* interviews, "the area of investigation is delineated, but there is no assumed order to the questions, and very little predetermined boundaries as to the topics that should be covered" (Fylan, 2005, p. 66). Conversely, in *structured* interviews "there is a predetermined list of questions that are covered in the same order for each person" (Fylan, 2005, p. 65-66). Scholars such as Bogdan and Biklen (1982) have warned that unstructured interviews require a great deal of skill, training and expertise, and as such are seldom appropriate for graduate students (in Carruthers, 1990).

This is why I chose to collect data through *semi-structured* interviews: semi-structured follow an interview guide, thus are not as free form as unstructured interviews but still provide the researcher and the participant with a great deal of flexibility which structured interviews do not allow (Horton, Macve & Struyven, 2004). The researcher can choose to address topics in the order that she wishes and can choose to further inquire into certain topics to clarify statements, for example. Additionally, interviewees have "a degree of freedom to explain their thoughts and to highlight areas of particular interest and expertise that they felt they had" (Horton, Macve & Struyven, 2004, p. 340). Because of these advantages, semi-structured

interviewing is the most popular interview technique used in qualitative research (Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson & Kangasniemi, 2016).

The interview guide is a set of pre-determined questions which cover the main themes of the study:

It offers a focused structure for the discussion during the interviews but should not be followed strictly. Instead, the idea is to explore the research area by collecting similar types of information from each participant [...], by providing participants with guidance on what to talk about. (Kallio et al., 2016, p. 2955)

My interview guide was inspired by a previous study by the CFSI's Centre for Intercultural Learning investigating the transfer of learning from training to the field in expatriation assignments, which also employed semi-structured interviews and explored the challenges of expatriation (Centre for Intercultural Learning, 2010). It was structured as follows: first, I opened the discussion with warm-up questions about the participant's current situation and international background. How long have they been on post so far? How long is their current posting? Which previous posting experiences do they have, if any? Then, the interview was divided into three main themes: about the job and the challenges associated with it, about everyday life on post, and about preparations for posting. I concluded the discussion with wrap-up questions designed to elicit reflection on the individual's *overall* experience abroad: If you had to do it again, is there anything you would do differently? Is there anything you would do again? And: What advice would you give to a new diplomat who is about to go on his/her first posting? My last question asked if the interviewees would like to mention something we had not covered during our conversation. It was a way to gather the participants' final thoughts and was often the source of interesting insights (see Appendix B for the full interview guide).

My interview guide was originally slightly longer than this, with the same themes but with more questions on each theme. I drastically shortened it after the first interview, after I got ‘lost’ in the many follow up question options I had written out for myself—originally not trusting myself to come up with them spontaneously. Checking the interview guide too frequently interrupted the natural flow of the conversation. I also realized just how much time could be spent exploring one question if proper follow-up questions were asked. A shorter interview guide allowed me to truly lean into the interviewee’s story without worrying as much about the next question I should pick from the guide. Besides, I began to know the simplified interview guide by heart after a few interviews.

Moreover, I had originally intended to discuss only the current posting, as I expected memories and accounts of the previous ones to be too vague or difficult to recall for the interviewees. On the contrary, participants frequently wished to discuss previous posting experiences, especially if they didn’t consider their current posting to be their most challenging one to date. Interviewees remembered anecdotes and impactful moments quite vividly. After a few interviews, I widened the scope of the questions to include previous posting experiences as well.

3.2.3 Participant Recruitment and Data Collection Procedure

The recruitment criteria were the following: participants were to be (1) Canadian diplomats (i.e., CBS), (2) who were currently posted abroad (i.e., on a diplomatic passport). Participants were recruited from four Canadian Missions (both bilateral and multilateral) located in Western Europe and in Western Africa. These locations were chosen because of ease of access for the researcher (I cannot detail the reasons further to protect participant anonymity—more on this issue below). After receiving the permission from the respective

Heads of Mission to recruit participants among the CBS, potential participants were contacted by email. Around 50 recruitment emails were sent out in December 2018.

Twelve diplomats volunteered to participate in the study, including three women and nine men. Participants had varied degrees of experience, ranging from one to seven posting experiences (with an average of three postings per participant). Together, participants' posting experiences covered a wide variety of locations all over the globe. All participants were career diplomats except two, for whom representing Canada abroad was a temporary activity.

Data collection took place in January 2019. Three interviews were conducted in English and nine in French, according to participants' preference. All interviews were conducted in person, except for two which were by Skype. Of the ten in-person interviews, three were done either at the researcher's home or at the interviewees' home, and the other six interviews were done at the participant's workplace (the Mission). I received permission from all the participants to record the interviews, which lasted between 45 and 60 minutes each.

3.2.4 Reflexivity: Insider or Outsider?

Reflexivity is a key component of qualitative research (Berger, 2013). It is "the process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of researcher's positionality as well as active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome" (Berger, 2013, p. 220). The need for the explicit recognition of the impact of the researcher's identity and characteristics on the research process, which was originally highlighted by the field of critical ethnography, has now spread to all social sciences (Sherif, 2001).

Especially relevant to my research is the "insider-outsider" debate in qualitative methodology. Outsider researchers are those that do not belong to the group they study, whereas insider researchers do. The traditional assumption is that outsider researchers, because

of their distance with the participants, are able to maintain a higher degree of objectivity and “observe behaviors without distorting their meanings” (Mullings, 1999, p. 340). However, this assumption is increasingly being challenged with the recognition that “objective” production of knowledge is in any case unachievable in social sciences (Sherif, 2001). On the other hand, insider researchers argue they have an advantage because their knowledge of the group enables them to “gain more intimate insights into their opinions” (Mullings, 1999, p. 340). Thus, it is important to reflect on how my positionality, either as an insider or outsider, as well as other identities such as my cultural-identity, gender, race, and class, could influence my research, from conception to data collection and analysis, and to final interpretation (Mullings, 1999).

As I previously explained, I am a diplobrat: my parents are Canadian diplomats who have served in various Canadian missions abroad. I am not a diplomat myself, but I do have some insider knowledge of the functioning of the diplomatic institution in Canada. Additionally, I have worked at a Canadian Embassy abroad as an LES for a few summers during my Bachelor’s. The diplobrat identity is interesting from a research perspective. In the context of this research, I argue that it is that of the “partial-insider” (Sherif, 2001). Being a child of diplomats who has been expatriated as a result of my parents’ status and who was bound during that time abroad to the *Global Affairs Canada Code of Ethics* as a dependent makes me an insider of the diplomatic institution. Furthermore, my past work as an LES further solidifies this insider position within the organization, as LES are central to the operation of Missions abroad. However, I still am an outsider to my specific group of research participants, as I am not and never was a CBS. In line with Berger (2013), I believe this partial insider status shaped three main aspects of my research:

1. My ease of access to the field;
2. The nature of my relationship with the participants; and

3. The nature of the information I sought to collect and my analysis of it.

First, I believe my past inside work experience and diplobrat status strongly facilitated my access to normally closed off spaces. For instance, I was able to attend the pre-departure training without difficulty because of my status as a “dependent” (child or spouse of a diplomat on posting). I was also granted facilitated access through security to the Missions thanks to my diplomatic passport.

Second, my position as a partial insider also facilitated rapport building with participants on various levels. Some participants were former diplo-brats like me, and explicitly alluded to that fact during interviews: “I’m a dip-brat like you”; “Mon père était diplomate, comme toi.” Some were ex-colleagues of my parents’ who recognized my family name. Others were my ex-colleagues’ new colleagues. Finally, other participants were themselves raising diplobrats. So, even if our professional identities were distinct, we shared challenges and a similar perspective as members of the diplomatic institution. Some references were made to our shared knowledge of the workings of the institution during the interviews. For example:

Participant: Each one of these [postings] was interspersed with a home assignment.

Interviewer: Okay.

Participant: That sounds familiar?

Interviewer: Going back to Ottawa?

Participant: Going back to Ottawa.

This is what Mullings (1999) coins a shared *positional space*, that is, “areas where the situated knowledges of both parties in the interview encounter, engender a level of trust and co-operation” (p. 340): these shared experiences and points of reference, as well as shared identity as people of the Canadian diplomatic institution enabled us to have the interviews from a standpoint of trust.

Third, I recognize that this partial-insider status also influenced the information I sought to collect, and my interpretation of the information that was shared with me (whether I thought of it as representative and important or not). For instance, as a woman, I was particularly interested when a female participant confided in the challenges of holding leadership roles abroad in male-dominated cultures. As a diplobrat, when participants explained the constraints of going on posting with children, I was especially prone to asking follow-up questions. And, as my parents were recently posted to a hardship post, I was also keen on further inquiring about hardship ratings when participants brought them up. A significant caveat of this, however, is that I may have projected my own biases and imposed my own beliefs and perceptions onto participants' stories (Berger, 2013).

3.2.5 Ethical Challenge: Confidentiality

A key ethical challenge faced throughout this study is that of *confidentiality*. Tolich (2004) distinguishes two types of confidentiality: internal and external. *External confidentiality* is confidentiality in the traditional sense: where the researcher promises not to identify the research participants in the final report, so that they may not be identified by outsiders. On the other hand, *internal confidentiality* is “the ability for research subjects involved in the study to identify each other in the final publication of the research” (p. 101). In other words, the central concern of internal confidentiality is: how can I, the researcher, present my research data so that *even insiders* are unable to identify each other in the final report? In this case, insiders would be GAC employees. This was a challenge throughout the research process, especially because the foreign service community is so tightly knit.

At the participant recruitment level, to preserve the participants' anonymity *vis-à-vis* their hierarchical superiors, potential participants were contacted *directly* using my email, and not through their supervisors. Interviews took place at the participant's place of choice, often

in a private or semi-private setting (participant's office, closed room). During the interviews themselves, participants were also acutely aware of both external and internal confidentiality issues, and a recurrent difficulty during the interview process was eliciting detailed depictions of specific experiences. Sometimes, getting thorough accounts of some issues was not possible because of the confidential nature of diplomatic work, and participants remained vague: "Je vais rester général," cautioned one participant. Other times, participants were well aware of the possibility of internal confidentiality breach if I directly reported the information they shared with me: "Mais là, je sais pas comment vous allez arranger ça. Si vous parlez, on va vite identifier qu'il s'agit de [nom de la Mission]," worried another participant.

For this reason, I had to take specific steps to preserve the participants' anonymity in my data presentation. I purposefully choose to remain vague about the number of Missions in which I collected data, the specific location of said Missions, and their specific type (e.g., Consulate, High Commission, Delegation, etc.). I will also not provide a detailed profile of each of my participants, as clues could be cross-referenced to identify them (some missions can be quite small, with fewer than ten CBS). Participants will not be named nor will be given pseudonyms, and I will remain vague about who said what. Data was also edited to remove any references to specific locations (country or city).

3.3 Methodological Approach: Data Management and Analysis

3.3.1 Data Management: Transcription

I found myself overwhelmed with the amount of data I had collected: almost 700 minutes of recoded conversation. To manage this data, I proceeded to transcribe it in its entirety. According to Mero-Jaffe (2011), transcription is a necessary step to analysis, as "only written language can be managed," that is, "sorted, copied, examined, evaluated and quoted" (p. 232).

Transcription can be defined as “the transference of spoken language [...] to the written word” (Mero-Jaffe, 2011, p. 232). However, the transcript can never be a “verbatim record of discourse” (McLellan, MacQueen & Neidig, 2003, p. 65), because the transcriber must decide, at various levels, whether and how to transcribe linguistic and non-linguistic elements of the interview. In this sense, transcribing it is not a natural process, but a selective, interpretive and representational one (Davidson, 2009).

One basic problem, for example, is deciding where and when is punctuation required. Indeed, McLellan, MacQueen and Neidig (2003) warn that misusing punctuation can “change the intent or emphasis of an interviewee’s response or comment” (p. 66). Transcribers must also consider how to manage speech elisions, incomplete sentences, overlapping speech, intonation, emphasis, volume change, body language, facial expressions, gestures, contextual information regarding pauses or silences, and setting descriptions (McLellan, MacQueen & Neidig, 2003, p. 66). Thus, “essentially, researchers undertake their first data reduction step when they decide what will be transcribed and what will be left out” (McLellan, MacQueen & Neidig, 2003, p. 66). In this sense, the transcript is not a realist object, but a constructivist one: it is a representation of the co-constructed reality and meaning created during the interviews (McLellan, MacQueen & Neidig, 2003).

These considerations are reflected in the two main methods of transcription: naturalized and denaturalized transcription (Davidson, 2009; Mero-Jaffe, 2011). *Naturalized* transcription seeks to be as detailed as possible, focusing, on top of content, on details such as laughter, stutter, mumbling, pauses, gestures and body language (Mero-Jaffe, 2011, p. 232; Davidson, 2009, p. 39). In contrast, *denaturalized* transcription presents ‘cleaned-up’ data, where such details are omitted. Its focus is on “the essence of the interview, the meaning and the perceptions that were created and its part in the discourse” (Mero-Jaffe, 2011, p. 232).

As most researchers do (Davidson, 2009), I used a combination of both methods. I aimed to transcribe the interviews so they would read like a natural conversation. As such, I left in the interviewees' filler words and verbal tics (e.g., um, uh, yeah, like). I also included contextual information when I deemed it necessary, for example, when one Skype interview I conducted from home was interrupted because my doorbell rang, and the interviewee was cut off mid-sentence. I used italics to indicate when interviewees emphasized certain words and noted between brackets instances of laughter and sarcasm. I also included some non-linguistic data, such as shrugs, but left out others such as coughs (one participant was sick and coughed frequently), body language and facial expressions. Moreover, names and revealing information were kept in the transcripts as context for the analysis but were censored if cited in the final writeup for confidentiality reasons.

Once the transcriptions were completed, I sent each participant a copy of his/her transcript for review and approval, but also as a thank you for donating his/her time to research (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). All participants approved of the content of the transcripts. In total, the 700 minutes of interview amounted to 154 pages of transcript, single spaced.

3.3.2 Data Management: Preparation for Coding

Analysis has been defined as “the search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain why those patterns are there in the first place” (Bernard, 2006, in Saldana, 2009, p. 8). I originally approached data analysis using an inductive thematic analysis, that is, a descriptive approach “for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006 in Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013, p. 400), where “the coded categories are derived directly from the text data” (p. 401).

Before commencing coding, I immersed myself in my data by reading it over and writing memos in the margins of the transcripts for future reference. Data immersion is

recommended by scholars to “marinate in the data,” which “aids in sensemaking and in considering a variety of interpretations” (Tracy, 2013, p. 188).

Coding is an essential aspect of analysis in qualitative research. Coding is the systematic labeling of the data with *codes* (Tracy, 2013, p. 186). A code is a label, “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldana, 2009, p. 3). Coding can be done either manually, or by using CAQDAS (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software) (Lindlof, 2011; Saldana, 2009). I chose to code manually, in a Microsoft Word document, because I thought learning to use an unfamiliar program would distract me from the data and the task at hand. I tackled the interviews one by one, in chronological order.

3.3.3 Data Analysis: First Level Coding

First-level coding (also referred to as primary-cycle coding by some scholars [Tracy, 2013]), is the initial coding activity undertaken by the researcher (Tracy, 2013, p. 189). First-level codes “focus on ‘what’ is present in the data” (Tracy, 2013, p. 189). I simultaneously used descriptive, process and in vivo coding as my first cycle coding methods (Saldana, 2009). Simultaneous coding is appropriate when “the data’s content suggests multiple meanings that necessitate and justify more than one code since complex social interaction does not occur in neat, isolated units” (p. 62). Throughout this process, I used the constant comparative method “to compare the data applicable to each code,” and “modify code definitions to fit new data” (Tracy, 2013, p. 190). Additionally, I wrote analytic memos in the margins with the “comment” tool in Microsoft Word. These were ideas for analysis, particularly evocative quotes, or dilemmas I wanted to explore further.

Researchers recommend using a codebook to organize the identified codes (Tracy, 2013). A codebook is a “data display that lists key codes, definitions, and examples that are

going to be used in [the] analysis” (Tracy, 2013, 191). I organized my first level codes in an Excel table, which I split into five broad categories: differences, challenges, strategies, pros, cons and consequences. *Differences* are ways in which interviewees described their life to be different abroad—characteristics of difference. *Challenges* are aspects of posting which were difficult to manage. *Strategies* encompass what the interviewees did to overcome the challenges. *Pros* are elements which helped them overcome the challenges. *Cons* are elements which made it difficult to overcome the challenges. *Consequences* are consequences of the challenges (e.g., stress). I wrote next to each code the paragraph numbers in which they appeared in each interview. I ended up with 293 first-level codes. See Table 3 below for examples of my first level codes.

Table 3

Example First Level Codes

Quote	First Level Code
“The only thing is when you go on a posting, you are best served if you keep an open mind about what life is like. It’s not going to be home. But then, when you get back to Ottawa it’s not home either. It’s close to it, and you will adjust...”	Readapting to home (Challenge)
“Ask the same question to different people. I think this is important that one person’s perspective is not necessarily the right answer. You might ask five people and get five different perspectives and in the end your own will be somewhere in that. But the more perspectives you get, the [better].”	Consulting peers (Strategy)
“I think I skipped the initial sort of honeymoon period. I go right into noticing the differences...”	Intercultural communication theory; Self-awareness/ reflection; (Pro)
“Certainly I expected a... cleaner, more manicured city than it is. This is a dog yard. This place is a bit trashy. You know, before we came we [...] thought, “Oh my gosh! It’s going to be beautiful, palm trees, benches and...” It’s, you know, it’s a construction site, that hadn’t been worked on for about ten years. So, it’s got garbage and dumps... and it’s hot, there’s nowhere to stop...”	Overtured expectations (Con)
“I really tried to avoid calling people.”	Avoidance of certain behaviors (Consequence)

3.3.4 Data Analysis: Second Level Coding

Tracy (2013) describes second-level coding as the process during which “the researcher critically examines the codes already identified in primary cycles and begins to organize, synthesize, and categorize them into interpretive concepts” (p. 194). Thus, second-level codes go beyond descriptive first level codes and are more analytic and interpretive in nature.

I began my second-level coding by tidying up my data: merging duplicated codes, subdividing codes of a wider-scope, and grouping codes into bigger topics together. I used pattern coding for my second-cycle codes, which are “explanatory or inferential codes [...] that identify an emergent theme, configuration, or explanation” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, in Saldana, 2009, p. 152). Pattern coding is appropriate for the “development of major themes from the data” (Saldana, 2009, p. 152). During this coding process, I wrote my research questions in bold on at the top of my research notes to guide my analysis, to not stray away from the problem at hand.

I also organized my second-level codes into an Excel table. One table for the challenges, and one table for the strategies. For each second-level code, I listed its first-level codes and example quotes. Table 4 below shows examples of my second level codes.

Table 4
Example Second Level Codes

Second Level Codes	First Level Codes
Returning home: “another posting”	Readjusting to Canadian culture & lifestyle Feeling distanced from Canadian peers Feeling misunderstood by Canadian peers
Social Isolation	Difficulty maintaining a constant social circle Security constraints Little contact with host nationals Cultural & linguistic gap
Intercultural Management	CBS lack of managerial experience LES non-conformity to Canadian standards LES resistance to change Cultural & hierarchical gap Stereotype reproduction among CBS

With this thematic analysis, I identified four challenges faced by Canadian diplomats on posting, along with three categories pertaining to adaptation strategies. However, I struggled to depart from a very descriptive presentation of the data to a more interpretive analysis. My research director and I felt this analysis approach did not fully capture the essence of the data, so I returned to the drawing board.

3.3.5 Data Analysis: The Dialectical Approach

It dawned on me that diplomats are peculiar, not only because of their repeated expatriations, but also because of the unique organizational environment in which they work on post (the mission). To better capture this experience, I had to integrate organizational elements into my analysis, which had been so far very individual-centric. After re-reading my literature review, I decided to re-approach my data from a dialectical perspective, following Martin and Nakayama's (2015) suggestion.

This entailed a slight reframing of my metatheoretical perspective. In their extensive review of the literature on organizational contradictions, dialectics and paradoxes, Putnam, Fairhurst and Banghart (2016) identify five metatheoretical traditions associated with dialectics: (1) process-oriented systems perspectives, (2) structuration research, (3) critical studies, (4) postmodern approaches, and (5) relational dialectics theories (p. 98-122). My use of dialectics borrows both from relational dialectics theory and postmodern approaches, which I outline below.

3.3.5.1 Relational Dialectics Theory

The dialectic approach to the study of interpersonal relationships was pioneered by Baxter and Montgomery's (1996) relational dialectics theory and draws upon Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin's (1982) work on dialogism. In simple terms, relational dialectics theorizes the construction of meaning through language use in the process of relating with

people (Baxter & Norwood, 2015). This approach understands communication as *constitutive* of the social world, the self, and relationships. Communication is not simply a reflection of social reality; instead, social reality itself is constituted through communication (Baxter, 2004, p. 3).

Moreover, Bakhtin understood social life as a dialogue of opposing discourses. To quote Baxter and Norwood (2015): according to Bakhtin, “the social world is characterized by multiple and competing viewpoints, perspectives, or ideologies (known as discourses) whose interplay constructs meaning. From the discursive struggle among competing discourses, meaning is produced, reproduced, and sometimes transformed” (p. 2). Relational dialectics theory applies this idea of competing discourses to relationship: communication, or dialogue, in relationships is also a “dialectical tension of contradictory verbal-ideological forces, or discourses” (Baxter, 2004, p. 8). For example, Baxter (2004) identified three dialectic tensions which interplay during the process of relating: integration-separation, certainty-uncertainty, and expression-non expression (p. 8). These dialectics of relating do not exist in parallel but are interrelated and interwoven. As such, as Baxter (2004) writes, relationships are “a complex knot of contradictory interplays” (p. 8).

Studies aligned with this perspective focus on (1) identifying dialectical tensions; (2) examining how these tensions are managed by individuals; and (3) analyzing how they interplay with each other (Putnam et al., 2016). My approach subscribes to relational dialectics theory insofar as I seek to identify the dialectical tensions faced by diplomats on post and how they manage them.

3.3.5.2 Postmodern Approaches

Another approach to dialectics, the postmodern approach, examines the “contradictions that emerge in the ongoing dynamics of power, control, and resistance *in organizations*”

(Putnam et al., 2016, p. 112, emphasis added). The main contribution of postmodern approaches is that it departs from a view of organizations as “rational, ordered entities,” instead seeing them as “characterized by irrationality and uncertainty, unstable power relations, and a plurality of meanings and interpretations” (p. 113). Thus, for postmodernists, “contradictions, paradoxes, and tensions [...] [are] innate features of organizational life” (p. 113).

Like the relational dialectics theory, this approach understands contradictions as grounded in discourse (p. 114). This approach also highlights the multiplicity of these contradictions: tensions in organizations are not stand alone but exist in multiples as a “by product of multiple voices that enter into organizational contexts,” which “appear in and across different organizational levels and different relationships” (p. 114). Moreover, scholars in this approach also link “local tensions to global contradictions and paradoxes” (p. 114).

According to Putnam et al. (2016), studies in the postmodern approach examine three main topics: (1) the role of tensions in negotiating multiple identities; (2) dialectics as the interplay of power and resistance; and (3) paradoxical practices in constituting organizational forms (p. 114). I borrow from postmodern approaches my focus on paradoxes in organizations and the interplay of power and resistance.

3.3.5.3 Dialectics For The Study of ICC

Martin and Nakayama (1999, 2010, 2015) are, to my knowledge, the first scholars to recommend studying ICC through a dialectical perspective. They argue that this approach emphasizes several important features of communication which are neglected in traditional, individual-centered studies of ICC (Martin & Nakayama, 2010, p. 66). Namely, dialectics emphasize the on-going, processual, dynamic, relational, contextual and contradictory nature of communication and human interaction, including intercultural relating. Moreover, by connecting “individual agency with larger, structural constraints into dialectical relationships,”

this approach foregrounds “the forces that constrain communicative choices” (Martin & Nakayama, 2015, p. 19). Finally, dialectics provide insight “into strategies by which people negotiate tensions to make sense of their experience and/or justify choices” (Martin & Nakayama, 2010, p. 71).

Hence, approaching ICC and the experience of diplomats abroad from a dialectical perspective is particularly interesting for multiple reasons. It enables examining tensions at both individual and organizational levels (RQ1), linking the two and highlighting how the diplomat’s individual communicative choices are constrained by the organization (the mission) and the institution (GAC). Moreover, dialectics provide a framework to examine how individuals (CBS) and the organization manages these tensions (RQ2).

Indeed, Putnam et al. (2016) identified three categories of individual and organizational responses to contradiction and paradoxical situations: (1) *either-or*, (2) *both-and*, and (3) *more-than* approaches. The authors note that *either-or* and *both-and* responses “accent individual choices,” while *more-than* responses center on “the individual-organizational interface in responding to contradictions” (p. 122). *Either-or* responses “treat contradictory poles as distinct phenomena that function independent of each other” (p. 122). *Both-and* responses treat “opposites as inseparable and interdependent,” in that “organizational members avoid segmenting opposites or privileging one pole over the other” (pp. 123-124). Finally, *more-than* approaches focus “on connecting oppositional pairs, moving outside them, or situating them in a new relationship” (p. 128). Each category is further subdivided into three response types, which are summarized in Table 5. This is the framework I used to analyze the participants’ responses to contradictions.

Consequently, my analysis is now best described as *iterative*, that is, it “alternates between emic, or emergent, readings of the data and an etic use of existing models, explanations,

and theories” (Tracy, 2013, p. 184). I reanalyzed my data through a dialectic lens which combines tenets of relational dialectics theory and postmodernism. I reorganized my first level-codes looking for contradictions causing stress, organizing them into dialectic tensions. From this second analysis, I identified five tensions which interplay at the individual and organizational level, which I present in the next chapter.

Table 5*Responses to Contradictions, Dialectics, and Paradoxes*

(taken from Putnam et al., 2016, pp. 125-127)

Categories of Responses	Definitions and Distinctive Features	Enacting responses
I. Either-Or Approaches		
<i>Defensive Mechanisms</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treats opposite tensions as independent • Focuses on coping with paradox • Efforts to leave the scene, subvert tensions • Often develops into negative reinforcing cycles • Fosters individual burnout and paranoia • Leads to loss of organizational vitality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projecting: shifting anxiety to a third person • Repressing: ignoring or denying tensions • Withdrawal: physical and/or psychological absence • Regression: moving to more secure options • Reaction forming: cultivating the opposite action • Ambivalence: lukewarm response
<i>Selection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on coping with paradox, neutralizes tensions • Common response for time pressures and contextual constraints • Loses synergy in the tensions between the poles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing one pole over the other • Favoring or privileging one pole
<i>Separation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source splitting—dividing tensions and assigning them to different people or units • Keeping poles separate and independent • Focuses on acceptance and living with paradox • Creates power imbalances, increases stress, and negative reactions • Closes off options and opportunities; loss of synergy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-coupling opposites through structural, temporal, or functional separation • Structural ambidexterity

(Continued)

Table 5
(Continued)

Categories of Responses	Definitions and Distinctive Features	Enacting responses
II. Both-And Approaches		
<i>Paradoxical Thinking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing cognitive abilities to recognize and reflect on paradoxes Aims to expose latent tensions Focuses on fostering comfort and openness to paradoxes Targets individual abilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeking valued differences between poles Reducing anxiety and fear
<i>Vacillation/ Spiraling Inversion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oscillating between opposite poles Focusing on segmenting then connecting poles Can disintegrate into separation Can lead to spiraling inversion or a perpetual oscillation between poles without moving forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incremental or radical shift between poles at different times Vacillating between phases and sequences
<i>Integration and Balance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compromises tensions through a forced merger Casts opposite poles in a zero-sum relationship Brings poles together but neutralizes tensions Focuses on meeting competing demands Often results in temporary or unstable responses Not necessarily effective for complex systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops a middle ground between the poles Seeks balance or an equilibrium point Aligns with steady state systems and equilibrium models

(Continued)

Table 5
(Continued)

Categories of Responses	Definitions and Distinctive Features	Enacting responses
III. More-Than Approaches		
<i>Reframing and Transcendence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses the dynamic interplay between opposites to form a new whole or a novel perspective • In reframing, opposing forces become encompassed inside each other to form a new whole • In transcending, opposing forces shift outside boundaries to different levels of meaning • May trigger unintended consequences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situating opposites in a new relationship • Developing discourses of transcendence • Searching for novel and creative responses
<i>Connection, Third Spaces, and Dialogue</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on the dynamic interplay of opposites; seeks energy from tensions • Develops new space or zone of ambiguity • Treats opposites as equally valued, interdependent and intertwined with each other • Engages in multi-stakeholder learning • Requires time, skill, and expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locating a discursive site to engage paradox and contradiction • Develops collaborative dialogue among stakeholders • Juxtaposes opposites in conversation • Engages multiple voices to privilege differences
<i>Reflective Practice and Serious Playfulness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using tensions to open meanings and develop options • Engaging in purposeful action driven by emotions rather than rational arguments • Challenges normal boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging in trial and error exploration • Enacts reflective positioning • Engages in humor, irony, and play

Chapter 4 – Findings

In this chapter, I present my answers to my two research questions. My analysis is split into two levels: micro and meso. At the *micro* level, I examine tensions at the individual level, that is, for the diplomat. At the *meso* level, I investigate tensions at the organizational level, that is, the Canadian mission. I will tackle both questions simultaneously at each level. The results are summarized in Table 6 below.

Table 6
Summary of Findings

Level	Tension	Definition	Response
<i>[MICRO]</i> <i>Individual</i> <i>(CBS)</i>	Home-Away	Tension between competing meanings of home and away-ness.	Separation Transcendence
	Continuity- Change	Tension between recurrent environmental, personal and social change, and the desire for personal integrity and a sense of continuity in one's life.	Balance
	Social Integration- Isolation	Tension between the desire for social integration on post (establishing meaningful connections with the host population) and the constraints to integration which lead to social isolation.	Vacillation
<i>[MESO]</i> <i>Organizational</i> <i>(Mission)</i>	Privilege- Disadvantage	Tension between the dominant Canadian culture and the disadvantaged host culture within the mission.	Withdrawal Reaction Forming Dialogue
	Individual Autonomy- Institutional Structure	Tension between the CBS' individual autonomy and the institutional structures which constrain it.	Withdrawal Reaction Forming Dialogue

4.1 [Micro] Individual Tensions

The first level of analysis, the micro-level, focuses on individual participants' experience of each tension. I identified three tensions which interplay at the individual level: home-away, continuity-change, and social integration-isolation.

4.1.1 Home-Away

The first theme I identified at the individual level is a tension between competing meanings of home and away-ness. Despite dominant discourses placing home and away in opposition to each other, in the struggle to feel at home throughout different postings, these two notions acquired new meanings for the participants: from concrete geographically situated spaces to more abstract, emotionally situated spaces.

Because of their constant expatriations, diplomats continually alternate between being in Canada and being abroad. The dominant discourse places Canada in opposition to being away: Canada is home, and when one is abroad, one is not at home. In this sense, home is a concrete, geographically situated space. For example, one participant who had been on multiple postings with his/her children explained:

We made a conscious choice to make sure our children knew they were Canadian, knew where they came from. **So that they always knew, even if they weren't there, that they had a place, a geographical location in this world, that they would call home.** So, we did this by staying in the same house every time we went back to Ottawa. This paid off, because they were able to tell their friends when we were on posting: "Oh yes, here's a picture of *my house*. I can tell you what bedroom I'm going to be in. I can tell you what school I'm going to go to. I can tell you where the park is. I can tell you where my cousins are, cuz they live in the neighborhood." Sometimes their friends would not have the same kind of sense of belonging. And their parents would be going from

posting to posting. So they would not be able to say “I have friends back home. I don’t even know where my home is!”

In this case, the meaning of home is even more specific: it is a house, where one ‘comes from.’

This dominant discourse avoids contradiction between the two poles by *separating* them. This is what Putnam et al. (2016) term an *either-or* response, which they define as “decoupling opposites through structural, temporal, or functional separation” (p. 125). Precisely, home and away are geographically and temporally separated: Canada is not away/away is not Canada, and one can only be at one place at a time.

Two interesting dynamics challenged this segmented status-quo and pushed for new emergent meanings of home and away. First, participants identified the need to recreate a sense of ‘home’ abroad. Second, when participants returned to Canada (home) after finishing their assignment abroad, they described it as feeling like “another posting.”

Despite the dominant opposition of home and away on a geographical basis, participants emphasized the importance of recreating a sense of ‘home,’ abroad. In this sense, ‘home’ acquired a new meaning, that is, that of a space where one is comfortable: “[il faut] vraiment faire de chez soi un endroit où on se sent vraiment à l’aise et bien.” For example, one participant described travelling away to ‘feel at home’ upon return:

Une fois qu’on arrive [...] dans sa nouvelle ville d’affectation, le fait de faire des petits voyages, et de revenir, [...] là on se sent vraiment à la maison. Donc si on arrive [...] et qu’on reste [...], peut-être qu’on va—ça va prendre plus de temps de sentir qu’on est vraiment à la maison. Mais de faire des voyages à l’extérieur de son nouveau lieu de résidence, et revenir, fait en sorte que **la référence de la maison change...**

Thus, home is associated with comfort, and away with discomfort. In this sense, one can learn to feel at home despite being geographically away from the dominant conception of home (Canada).

Additionally, the dominant conception of home as a comfortable, concrete geographic space was challenged when participants described struggling to readapt to Canada upon return from post. Indeed, one participant described returning to Canada as “another posting” in itself: “Home feels different,” s/he commented, “going back home, it’s never the same. [...] the place does change in very subtle ways. And after three or five years away, it takes a while to get used to.” Returning home means having to “get used to some of the quirks of Canadian society”: “you find out a little more starkly some of the deficiencies at home,” mused another participant.

Moreover, the struggle to readapt was worsened by both feeling distanced from and misunderstood by their Canadian peers. One participant described the difficulty relating to peers as follows:

I saw that like in [Eastern European country] for example, people tend to be very distrusting and very cold, at the beginning, but it’s also just a guard because I think that there was a long history of not really a lot of transparency in Government, not a lot of societal trust, and people sort of built up a hard exterior, especially towards foreigners, but when you really get to know people there’s like a kind of authenticity that comes through and like, honesty. And when I came back to Canada and everybody was super friendly right off the bat, I had my own personal distrust of that because part of me felt like it must be superficial if it came so easily and without earning it.

Another participant explained similarly:

When I ask my sons about, “when you talk to your Canadian friends, how do you describe life overseas?” They say: “We reduce it to four sentences because their

attention span is not there.” “You lived in [South East Asian country]? Okay that’s really neat. Wow, wow that’s fabulous! I’ve always wanted to go to Africa. [laugh]— But let’s talk about the Sens.” [...] And that’s one of the cross-cultural things that you have to learn about your own culture. [Whisper] *That people are not that interested in overseas stuff.*

This experience, in which away-ness feels present in Canada, challenges previous conceptions of home and away as situated in opposition as concrete geographic spaces. To manage this tension, participants described acquiring a new understanding of home:

You lose and regain a totally different concept of what home is. [...] So like “our people” are not necessarily like people who grew up in Fort McMurray drinking Tim Hortons. Our people tend to be people who travel a lot, who’ve had different experiences all over the world, who’ve like created a home that’s not necessarily a geographic space, but like a space in your mind, or like a community of people that’s nomadic. [...] And I think that this is like a common theme through a lot of diplomats that I’ve talked to.

This new understanding of home is more abstract and ‘emotionally’ situated. This epitomizes the *more-than* approach which Putnam et al. (2016) coin *transcendence*: opposites are positioned “in a novel relationship to each other by moving outside of a paradoxical system to a new level of meaning” (p. 129). Indeed, these emergent meanings of home and away place these concepts in a new relationship: from antithetical notions, they become porous, reconcilable, and compatible. There can be a sense of away-ness in Canada, and a sense of home abroad.

As such, the dominant discourse of home as a concrete geographical space in opposition to away (segmentation), was challenged by emergent meanings of home as a more abstract ‘comfort zone’ and as a “space in [one’s] mind” (transcendence), which enabled participants

to manage contradiction (feeling at home abroad and feeling abroad at home) in their back-and-forth between Canada and abroad. Next, I examine a more temporally situated tension, that of continuity and change.

4.1.2 Continuity-Change

The second theme that I identified at the individual level is a tension between continuity and change. That is, participants struggled to balance recurrently changing environments, accompanied by personal and social changes, with the desire to maintain a sense of continuity in one's life.

The interviews highlighted that diplomats are continually subjected to change as they constantly re-expatriate: “ma vie a été très différente dans tous ces pays,” confided one participant on his/her third posting. At the most basic level, diplomats face repeatedly changing social circles, as they must re-build a new friendship group with each new post. Because of this, maintaining a constant social circle is challenging:

Je pense à mes amis à Ottawa, ou au Nouveau Brunswick, [...] qui ont vécu toute leur vie là-bas, et qui voient [...] leurs amis au moins à chaque semaine, puis c'est des amis qu'ils connaissent depuis 20 ans, 30 ans. Puis les diplomates qui sont souvent sur le terrain, c'est comme, c'est vraiment on a des amis pendant trois ans, ou quatre ans, puis ça peut être des relations très intenses puis très profondes et tout, mais ensuite on les voit pas ! Peut-être pendant 10 ans, ou 20 ans, ou jamais.

Moreover, adaptation to each new host country affects diplomats on a personal level. Indeed, all participants stressed the importance of personal adaptation: “Il faut être respectueux des us et coutumes ici,” stated one participant. “Je pense qu'il faut s'adapter avec la meilleure volonté,” insisted another. Yet, personal changes often accompany these adaptation efforts: “Des fois c'est drôle parce que tu t'adaptes, et non seulement ça mais tu prends ces pratiques-là, et elles

deviennent les tiennes aussi. Donc ça, ça t'influence aussi. Toi aussi **tu changes** comme gestionnaire,” shared one experienced participant, “tu prends de l'expérience et peut-être que toi tu t'adaptes et **tu fais de cet élément culturel... tu te l'appropries d'une certaine façon**. Voilà. Et tu dis : « Bon, ouais, ça ça fonctionne pour moi ».” Another participant explained how adapting to post changed his/her personal values:

When I went to [South European country] and like a lot of joy is found in non-materialistic moments, so there's a lot more focus on like aesthetic beauty and culture and participating in a culture. For example, whether it's going out for a Sunday dinner with your extended family and eating like a [local meal], or just enjoying like [local] theater... there seems to be like a very profound idea of what [a happy life] is, whereas when I went back to Canada, I found again that like [...] happiness tended to be so measured, and it seemed to be like a lot more material than the things that I had grown to be accustomed to, so... [...] I found that a lot of my friend's narratives were like: “I bought this house, I have this position in my job, I did cardio for 45 minutes today, I ate 1276 calories today.” And I had like a lot of difficulty readjusting myself to this mentality because I found it to be missing the point, after I'd had like a totally different experience. So it was really hard for me to relate, or give value to my friend's experiences, because **part of me had changed**.

Thus, diplomats recurrently face change. However, constant change creates tensions with the desire for a sense of personal integrity and coherence in one's life. One participant explained this struggle as such: “It's [...] really difficult when [...] you're trying to reinvent your own identity, because you take pieces of different parts of communication through your journey, and you lose some parts of who you used to be as well,” s/he said, “**it's really difficult to maintain a sense of like personal integrity but to still go on and adapt yourself all the**

time to new environments.” Maintaining personal integrity while adapting to the host culture is also challenging when some of its elements clash with one’s core values:

When I lived in [Eastern European country], homophobia tended to just be like, the norm [...] So all the people that you talked to, even LES would make like homophobic jokes or like really difficult... statements, that I just couldn’t accept. So a part of you is like, **how do you maintain your integrity** while at the same time being open to the fact that other people have the right to be different.

This is why participants also emphasized the importance of finding continuity in one’s life. “On a besoin de **trouver des fils de continuité dans sa vie**, parce que la vie change à chaque fois aux quatre ans,” said one participant. “I think that the most important thing for me has been trying to be a consistent person with the same likes and dislikes no matter where I go,” confided another. Participants described multiple strategies to preserve this sense of continuity. For example, one participant described maintaining consistent hobbies and interests:

I always really loved music, and for me the thing that’s really important is being able to go to like concerts and playing with other musicians. And music is a universal language so it also helps like, cross a lot of barriers, and **it also gives you like always a continual sense of identity** if you’re doing the things that you love, regardless of like your physical location.

Another participant explained investing in maintaining strong, stable interpersonal relationships: “il faut établir des amitiés, puis des relations personnelles, puis vraiment investir de l’énergie, du temps à les maintenir,” s/he said. For multiple participants, maintaining stable relationships was particularly important with regards to the home social circle: “Keep in touch strongly with your folks back home,” advised one participant on his/her seventh posting, “that

sort of connection is quite important.” One participant also mentioned meditation as a tool to manage this tension.

These strategies to maintaining personal continuity despite constant change illustrate the *both-and* response to contradiction of *balance*, which Putnam et al. (2016) define as searching “for ways to embrace both poles through accepting the contradiction, working through the tensions, meeting competing demands, and finding an equilibrium point” (p. 124). Indeed, meditating and maintaining consistent hobbies and social circles do not eliminate the tension, but provide a way to simultaneously “embrace” both continuity and change.

In summary, the following quote aptly expresses this tension: “Il faut reconnaître que aller à l'étranger c'est une opportunité merveilleuse de connaître le monde, de vivre un style de vie qu'on ne vivrait pas nécessairement au Canada. Mais que ça... [...] ça interrompt la continuité d'une vie normale, disons.” Diplomats are faced with constantly changing environments, and adaptation brings about personal and social changes for the individual. Repeated adaptation created a tension between the desire for personal integrity and for a sense of life-continuity, which participants managed with the communicative response of *balance*. Next, I examine the tension between social integration and social isolation.

4.1.3 Social Integration-Social Isolation

The third theme I identified at the individual level is a tension between social integration and social isolation. That is, a tension between the expectation and desire to establish meaningful connections with the host population, and the actual state of social isolation many participants described finding themselves in on post.

It was clear that the participants valued connecting with the host population: “Quand on part en affectation [...], on arrive avec une famille, on s'installe là sur place, c'est sûr que l'objectif premier bien sûr c'est le boulot, mais il faut également vivre dans la société là où on

arrive,” commented one participant, “oui on est étrangers, mais en même temps **on prend plaisir à découvrir le pays, on prend plaisir à découvrir sa population, et à faire des choses avec eux.**” Another participant spoke in similar terms:

I think that like, the reason why I became a diplomat is because I wanted to travel a lot, and I really wanted to experience something beyond my mundane existence that I’d had before that. So, the integral part of my objective was **immersing myself in different cultures and trying to really live where I was living.** [...] For example, I’m also a musician and I always like to play with different bands in all of my postings, and **make local friends that were completely outside of the diplomatic context.**

In this, participants valued socializing outside of diplomatic circles: “try to get out into the real world as much as you can and out of that diplomatic, Western bubble. As tempting it is to stay there because it’s comfortable,” advised one participant. “[D]evelop a community. You know, get some people you know who are not *contacts*,” recommended another.

However, participants also confided how, despite their efforts, establishing meaningful connections with locals was a recurrent challenge. “J’étais très isolé. Comme, je me sentais... j’étais seul, oui,” recalled one participant about a particularly trying posting in Southern Africa. “I always felt there was a big gap between me and other people,” confessed another about a posting in South-East Asia. One participant posted in Western Europe even admitted: “ça fait deux ans et quelques mois que je suis ici, puis est-ce que j’ai des vrais amis [locaux] qui sont à l’extérieur de mon réseau de contacts ? Non. Non. C’est difficile.” This was particularly dismaying for many participants, because they often did not *expect* any difficulties integrating the host society: “On s’attend, dans un pays comme [pays d’Amérique Latine], à être un peu dans un *bubble* de l’Ambassade,” commented one participant, “tandis que à [ville d’Europe de l’ouest] on s’attend plus à s’intégrer. Et quand c’est pas nécessairement évident de faire ça, ça

peut être très décevant.” Another participant shared a similar experience regarding a posting in Southern Europe:

I think one of the biggest regrets that I did have when I was posted in [Southern Europe], for example, is that it was really difficult to make friends locally. [...] everyone assumes that when you live in a country that has the same economy or like the same television shows and stuff like that that you grew up with, that it would be easy to make friends. But it was actually extremely difficult.

Participants evoked multiple barriers to social integration. Overcoming the cultural gap and the language barrier was one part of the challenge. On top of that was bridging the vastly different life experiences, realities and horizons of diplomats on posting and of locals (e.g., the economic reality). For example, one participant recounted:

When I went to [Eastern African country], it was like in my own personal feeling, like ‘wow, I would like to invite some of my [local] staff and friends out to go dancing or go out for dinner,’ because when we had personal conversations in hallways, I just liked their personalities. However, I noticed that these particular members of staff, like the [locals] that I invited out, suddenly felt like, uncomfortable, because it was perhaps not necessarily in their culture that a Canadian would like sort of try to make a friendship given the economic disparity and given a huge amount of divide between the two. [...] there was always this unspoken barrier of like, ‘you can’t come to my house because my house is palatial, I can’t go to your house because you live in a slum, where do we actually meet in the middle?’ It was a lot of really awkward moments.

But one of the most significant barriers, especially in countries with higher hardship levels, were GAC’s security constraints. These often isolated the participants from the host population. For example, “In Russia there’s like security constraints that prevent you from having like a

lot of local friends, or that prevent you from inviting friends to your house,” explained one participant. Two extreme but evocative examples illustrate the isolation which can occur from GAC’s security constraints in high-hardship posts. In the first example, at a post in Central America, participants had to, among other things, respect a curfew:

J’avais pas de voisins de l’ambassade qui étaient près de chez moi, [...] j’étais seul dans la maison, pas de famille, pas de conjointe, pas de jardinier pour le weekend, pas d’employé de maison non-plus, donc j’étais seul pour les trois, quatre prochains jours qui s’en venaient. [...] ça a été difficile parce que je retournais à tous les soirs [et j’étais seul] [...] et ça a pris jusqu’en novembre avant qu’on enlève le couvre-feu. [...] on voyageait tous en blindés, et on se faisait déposer à la maison, et c’était fini.

In the second example, in Central Europe, participants were physically isolated by living in a compound:

Ici il y a pas une journée presque où j’ai pas au moins une ou deux rencontres avec des interlocuteurs [locaux]. Et je vis avec des [locaux]. Je sors, je me rends chez moi je dois passes à travers—je prends le métro avec les [locaux], je vais à la boulangerie, t’sais je veux dire, je vis au rythme des [locaux]. En [pays d’Asie centrale] je vis pas au rythme des [locaux]. Je vis dans un compound avec un mur, avec les Forces de sécurité, donc je vis vraiment dans un espèce de prison, dans un autre monde que eux. [...] T’sais, tu vis une réalité complètement différente.

Consequently, an interesting dynamic emerges wherein cohesion and camaraderie among diplomats became especially important if hardship conditions made it challenging to connect with locals:

Quand on est dans une mission comme [ville des Antilles aux conditions de vie difficiles], il y a beaucoup plus de convivialité entre les individus. [...] Alors qu'ici [ville d'Europe de l'ouest aux conditions de vies plus faciles] on la ressent pas.

And, participants emphasized the importance of establishing good relations with the fellow CBS on posting:

Il y a quelque chose qu'on se fait [...] souvent dire avant de partir à l'étranger. Notre famille au Département, dans notre équipe à l'Ambassade, ou cette équipe, ça sera vraiment notre famille à l'étranger pendant un certain nombre de temps. Pendant nos deux, trois, quatre ans où on sera là. Alors c'est important de faire en sorte qu'on est... qu'on se parle au moins ! Qu'on se connaisse, qu'on se comprenne et qu'on puisse... t'sais, vivre ensemble !

To socialize within the diplomatic circle, participants mainly took advantage of some organisational structures already in place: "je me suis par exemple beaucoup intéressé au cercle social ici [...]. On organise ici tous les vendredis soir un Happy Hour, et puis bon ben là je rencontre les Canadiens qui sont sur place," explained one participant on his/her first posting. In postings with isolating security restrictions, one participant described one experience in which where the CBS managed their office hours to minimize the time spent at home alone, as accompanying family (spouse and children) were forbidden at this particular post:

On allait prendre une bière peut-être à 5h, et puis après ça on remontait au bureau à 6h, puis on travaillait jusqu'à 7h30, 8h. Et puis là on s'en allait chez nous. On essayait de limiter la soirée la plus courte à la maison possible.

Consequently, the push and pull between social integration and isolation on post can be summarized at two levels. First, diplomats wish to integrate into the host society and establish meaningful connections with the host population but they are faced with a variety of constraints

(including institutional constraints) which often leave them in a state of social isolation abroad. Second, precisely because of the desire to integrate into the host society and to leave the diplomatic-Western bubble on post, socializing among diplomats could be neglected in posts where diplomats expect making local connections will be easy. In contrast, cohesion and camaraderie among diplomats was stronger in posts with tougher living conditions and where they were more isolated from the host population. This is the *both-and* response of *vacillation*, which Putnam et al. (2016) define as “shifting back and forth between the poles at different times or in different contexts” (p. 124). Indeed, to face the social isolation on post, participants prioritized socializing either with locals or with fellow diplomats depending on the hardship context of the post.

In this section, I presented the three tensions which shape the CBS’ experience on post: home-away, continuity-change and social integration-isolation. At the organizational level, diplomats must manage two additional tensions, which I present in the following section.

4.2 [Meso] Organizational Tensions

The second level of analysis, the meso-level, examines tensions at the organizational level. In this case, the organizations are the Canadian missions abroad. I found Canadian missions to be at the heart of two dynamic tensions which shape the organization’s functioning: *privilege-disadvantage*, and *individual autonomy-organizational structure*. Their interaction shapes the sometimes-tense relations between LES and CBS which are present in many missions. *Individual autonomy-organizational structure* is the tension between the diplomats’ autonomy and the institutional structures which constrain it. *Privilege-disadvantage* is the tension between the privileged Canadian culture and the disadvantaged host culture. Because of their close-knit interplay, I will tackle them simultaneously in the following section.

Before I proceed, I must offer two disclaimers. First, although the tensions in CBS-LES relations were consistently brought up by participants, it remains that these tensions occur with varying intensity depending on the mission. That is, not all Canadian missions are riddled with conflict between the CBS and the LES (I present here somewhat of a worse-case scenario). Second, it must be emphasized that I only interviewed CBS but no LES, and thus I have collected a partial and incomplete perspective of the issue, which is particularly important to note when examining the tension between privilege and disadvantage.

4.2.1 A Picture of LES-CBS Relations in Canadian Missions

Canadian missions are peculiar organizations for two main reasons. First, their hierarchical structure is such that the CBS are *always* in the managerial positions, and the LES *always* occupy the lower half of the organizational chart. Second, the managers of the organization, the CBS, are rotational: they change posts every few years, while the LES remain a permanent core of employees. “I think that that’s a dynamic that you don’t get in a lot of environments,” admitted one participant. This unusual organizational structure shapes CBS-LES relations in multiple ways.

Because of their rotationality, the CBS must repeatedly adapt to new environments and customs. To achieve this, particularly in the workplace, the CBS rely on the LES for their knowledge and experience of the host country and customs. One participant on his/her first posting emphasized this: “J’ai beaucoup compté sur leur soutien [des employés locaux] à mon arrivée, évidemment. [...] Ils m’ont appris des choses par rapport à l’histoire de l’Ambassade, l’histoire de certains dossiers etcetera, mais aussi comment fonctionnaient [...] des particularités locales,” he said, “donc oui mon intégration, je pense, a été réussie grâce au fait que mes collègues recrutés localement étaient présents pour moi.”

Yet, the hierarchical divide also sets the stage for inter-group tensions between the LES and the CBS. Indeed, the hierarchical divide only deepens the pre-existing cultural gap between the two groups, while structurally placing one group and culture (the Canadian one) in a dominant position, and the other (the LES and host culture) in a disadvantaged position. This power imbalance fosters resentment and inhibits fruitful collaboration. For example, this gap is evidenced in group dynamics within the mission's physical space. One participant described the existence of a "huge invisible screen" between the two groups at one particular post in East Africa, where "Canadians tended to hangout exclusively with Canadians [...] and [the LES] tended to eat at completely different tables in the lunchroom."

The inter-group divide and subsequent tensions also manifested themselves in managerial challenges. Indeed, multiple participants deplored the recurrent challenge of LES management. "I've noticed that locally engaged staff tend to have different work ethics and attitudes depending on their own culture," shared one participant, "it's interesting and it's a challenge, because at a certain point you do just need people to sit down and do the job that's in the description." Two participants warned LES could be flat out stubbornly unproductive and/or difficult to work with ("des employés [...] qui font pas grand chose"). Three participants described struggling with a strong resistance to change from the LES, and a resistance to adapting to Canadian performance standards and work-ethics. "I've experienced people who very much rebel against those hierarchies, and also against the defined roles," said one participant. "I had a really hard time [...]. You know, I kept trying to get him [the LES employee] to run things by me before he sent [the memo] out—which he of course resented [...]. Or sometimes he wouldn't consult me," recalled another. From the perspective of power relations, the CBS' ability to impose a Canadian work-culture on their employees illustrates their organizational privilege, and the LES' resistance to change can be understood as resistance to the dominant (Canadian) culture.

Participants deplored three additional organizational elements which hindered their management autonomy: the difficulty of ensuring continuity in employee management, GAC's strict rules regarding LES discipline, and insufficient managerial experience among CBS.

First, CBS rotationality worsens managerial challenges by complicating employee management continuity. "Le gros problème pour moi," analyzed one participant, "c'est le fait que nos rotations sont limitées à trois ans." S/he continued :

Donc en trois ans si on calcule qu'on a besoin d'une année pour nous s'adapter, bien connaître le travail, connaître les employés avec lesquels on travaille, ça prend un peu de temps à déterminer la qualité de votre employé. Et puis, bon bah souvent, au bout d'un an, vous vous rendez compte que l'employé est peut-être pas aussi bon que vous le croyiez, a peut-être des problèmes de comportement, des problèmes d'attitude... Et ces problèmes-là il les a avant probablement il y a 10 ans, il y a 15 ans... **Mais à force de travailler à l'ambassade, à force d'avoir des rotations de deux ou trois ans, évidemment les gens ont jamais été pris en main. [...] C'est notre système qui fait en sorte que ça pose problème.**

Another participant explained this dynamic in similar terms: "The LES have been there for... some of them for many years, some of them less so. And you know, you're coming in and you're—the Canadians come and go," s/he said, "so they [the LES] have their way of doing things and it's really hard to come in and change things, even if you can see what the problem is, coming in from the outside." In this situation, deep rooted issues are never properly addressed.

Second, the CBS' managerial autonomy is also constrained by GAC's strict rules regarding LES discipline. "C'est difficile de renvoyer une personne ! Il faut avoir un dossier trois centimètres d'épais," lamented one participant:

Il faut prendre la personne en main, donc il faut la rencontrer une fois par mois, voir les progrès, voir ce qui a pas bien été, après si ça va pas au bout de—de façon mensuelle, il faut aller de façon bi-hebdomadaire, etcetera. Donc c'est pas facile. C'est pas facile. [...] Donc on se retrouve avec des employés qui sont là depuis 15 ans, 20 ans, et puis qui font pas grand-chose.

Third, LES management is particularly challenging because of insufficient management experience among many CBS. This is particularly the case for those who joined GAC as their first employment. For example, one participant confided his/her first posting was also his/her “first time supervising people.” Another participant affirmed that diplomats are often motivated to go abroad to do diplomacy, not managerial work; and besides, good diplomats don't always make good managers: “C'est pas tout le monde qui—vous savez quand vous êtes [par exemple] un Agent d'immigration, [...] c'est pas évident que vous ayez les capacités d'être gestionnaire.” Interestingly, the two participants who *had* accumulated significant managerial experience before joining GAC reported having a much easier time with LES management. “Ça se passe toujours très bien [avec les employés locaux],” commented one participant on his/her second posting. S/he continued:

Avant de travailler pour le Gouvernement moi j'étais gestionnaire pendant à peu près 10 ans [au Canada]. Alors je travaillais avec pleins d'employés de toutes les cultures, toutes sortes d'âges, d'étudiants, des plus âgés, alors... on travaillait tous en équipe. Et, oui, il y avait toujours des conflits. [...] Tout ce que je faisais jour à jour c'est de résoudre des conflits, des conflits entre les gens.

Consequently, dialectics of privilege-disadvantage and individual autonomy-institutional structure are at play at multiple levels. Missions are at the heart of power relations, that is, the disadvantaged LES' resistance to the hierarchically dominant Canadian culture.

These power relations are the basis for CBS-LES inter-group tensions. In this environment, the CBS are in a position of power, while simultaneously being constrained by the structure of the mission which limits their managerial autonomy and ability to manage these inter-group tensions.

4.2.2 CBS' Responses to Tensions

I identified three main ways in which participants managed these tensions. The first two are defensive mechanisms: withdrawal and reaction forming (either-or responses). The third is a dialogue response (more-than).

The most commonly cited response was *withdrawal* (either-or category). Withdrawal is a defensive mechanism which involves “leaving the scene, psychologically or physically” (Putnam et al., 2016, p. 123). Participants described this in multiple instances. For example, when asked how one issue between LES and CBS at one mission was resolved, one participant answered: “**Well, I left before the problem was solved.** But I think that that is actually a common story among all the rotating staff that you will talk to,” s/he lamented, “because there are long term deep issues that take years to sort out, and we’re just not here long enough to see it through.” A few participants described feeling helpless to improve the situation and ‘giving-up’: “I knew I’d only be there for [a short time],” said one participant, “and you know, I tried for the first two months, and then [...] you know, then **I realized that I wasn’t gonna change them, I’m not gonna change anything, let’s just try to survive.**” Withdrawal is a frequent response because the rigidity of the institutional structures which constrain the CBS’ personal agency/autonomy leaves them poorly equipped to face these challenges: “J’ai parlé avec une collègue il y a pas longtemps qui m’a dit qu’elle a eu beaucoup de difficultés avec une employée [locale],” recalled one participant, “et puis la seule façon qu’on avait pu, qu’on avait choisi de gérer le cas, ça avait été de le donner à un autre superviseur.”

The second defensive mechanism is *reaction forming*. Two participants described an interesting communicative phenomenon which took place among the CBS: the reproduction of stereotypes about LES. “You assume the ideas and prejudices of your colleagues or the people that came before you,” remarked one participant. S/he explains her experience as such:

It’s interesting because we all took this job to travel and to learn more about the world, but there tends to be a lot of prejudice and stereotyping that happens, even as diplomats. So, people would tend to make statements like: “Oh the *French* are like this,” or, “Oh the Kenyans are like *this*,” or “Oh, don’t trust those Russians because,” or whatever else. [...] for example when I came to [Western Europe], there’s like a huge division between supervisors and the people who are supervised here, like I mentioned. And so a lot of the Canada-based officers when I came here said to me: “Well, the [locals], as you can observe, love protests and riots, and they are the given structure, and no matter what you do you will never, *never* convince them to be on *our* side, and the *best* you could possibly do is expect them, or hope that they would follow the general regulations. But if you’re gonna harp on somebody for like, not being on time, or if you’re going to make a specific request for somebody to do more work, it will never go over, so just don’t even try.”

Another participant described a similar experience:

Quand je suis arrivé, [...] j’ai dû superviser deux personnes. [...] la première chose qu’on m’a dit, c’est « faites attention à ces deux employés, parce qu’ils ont fait... » je sais pas, toutes genres de choses. Ils font pas du bon travail, ils sont toujours... je sais pas, en retard, ils sont absents, ils s’en vont... *dadidada* pleins de trucs. Je me suis dit « bon ! » Quand t’entends ça te donne un peu de... tu te méfies un peu ! Tu commences sur le mauvais pas, vraiment, avec les gens.

This is *reaction forming*, which involves “cultivating an oppositional action or belief” (Putnam et al., 2016, p. 122). The reproduction of stereotypes about the LES is a defensive mechanism which occurs in reaction to the perceived helplessness in improving the deep-rooted issues between the two groups. Unfortunately, this stereotyping of the disadvantaged group within the mission reproduces the existing power structures: it cements the *us versus them* sentiment among both groups, creates self-fulfilling prophecies, and works to keep Canadian culture as the dominant work culture.

Putnam et al. (2016) do note that “organizational members often rely on defensive mechanisms [such as withdrawal] when they feel trapped in self-reinforcing cycles, especially when contradictions cross multiple organizational levels” (p. 123). This statement is particularly accurate with regards to the CBS’ experiences in the mission. However, the authors also warn that “employing defensive mechanisms often fosters individual burnout, paranoia, and loss of organizational vitality” (p. 123). Neither withdrawal, nor reaction forming are sustainable responses for the organization. They favour the reproduction of existing structures and tensions.

The second response I identified is *dialogue/discussion* (more-than approach). Putnam et al. (2016) define dialogue as “communicative practices that seek energy from tensions, engage ongoing interplay between opposites, and keep paradoxes open” (p. 129). Specifically, dialogue is “a particular type of forum in which stakeholders treat opposite poles as equally valued and form co-developed meanings among people, situations, and events” (p. 129). I identified dialogue responses both at individual and organizational levels.

At the individual level, participants used dialogue to manage the power imbalance in their managerial practices. For example, one participant’s management of deadlines with his/her team exemplifies this. “[Les locaux] n’ont pas nécessairement cette orientation vers les

résultats que les Canadiens ont. Et un suivi continu de progrès peut être, si ce n'est pas très très subtilement communiqué ça peut être perçu comme de la micro-gestion," s/he noted:

Moi, comme, j'ai essayé de cocréer les attentes, puis les échéanciers. Donc, moi je... je prends toujours comme une approche assez collaborateur puis collectif, d'équipe, pour... **Pour que ça ne soit pas perçu comme « c'est moi qui impose », soit des objectifs ou des *timelines* sur quelqu'un.** Donc c'est de s'asseoir ensemble, par équipe, puis dire « OK, c'est ça qu'il faut qu'on fasse, comment est-ce qu'on veut le faire ? » Puis, comme « si c'est ça la date limite, quelles seront nos *milestones* pour s'assurer qu'on puisse le faire ? » Donc c'était beaucoup, pour moi, de **prendre une approche collaborateur puis collective, co-créative avec mon équipe.**

In this example, being mindful of the context (the hierarchical structure which places Canadian conceptions of time management in a dominant position), the participant sought to balance power differences by giving LES some decisional power through dialogue with his/her team.

Dialogue can also take place at a mission-wide level. For example, one participant recounted being sent by GAC to a mission to act as a mediator between the CBS and LES. Indeed, tensions between the two groups had risen to new heights when a LES was fired because of an incident. S/he explains:

Il venait de se commettre une grosse faute dans ce bureau-là [...] Il y a deux clans qui se sont formé après ça. Le clan [des employés locaux] qui aimait [l'employé local], qui a perdu son travail évidemment, le clan [des employés locaux] qui l'aimait pas, il y a eu un peu de guerre entre les Canadiens qui mettaient tout le monde dans le même panier... [...] [L'Ambassadeur(e)] voulait vraiment que je reparte les ressources humaines, que j'enlève l'animosité qu'il y avait dans les clans, que... [...] Donc ma job

c'était de rencontrer du personnel : « Qu'est-ce que vous voulez ? Où vous voulez aller ?

Qu'est-ce qu'on fait maintenant avec la situation ? Avez-vous des objectifs ? »

Through dialogue, GAC aimed to ease tensions between the two groups. In this case, discussion gives a voice to the structurally disadvantaged LES in the mission and opens a space so new shared meanings can emerge between the two groups.

In contrast to the defensive mechanisms which end up reinforcing the pre-established structures and tensions, discussion seeks to moderate and balance power imbalances within the mission. The CBS' frequent managerial inexperience leads them to adopt inappropriate responses to these two tensions (defensive mechanisms instead of discussion). It must be noted, however that while dialogue seeks to moderate power imbalances by bringing the two groups together through a shared space of meanings, it remains that the power to empower (to initiate dialogue) remains in the dominant group's hands.

We have seen how diplomats manage tensions of home-away, continuity-change and social integration-social isolation at the individual level, and how dialectics of privilege-disadvantage and individual autonomy-organizational structure interplay in the mission. In the following chapter, I discuss my results and highlight their contributions to the literature.

Chapter 5 – Discussion and Conclusion

In this final chapter, I wrap up this thesis with a discussion of my results. I first summarize my findings, contrast them with the existing literature on ICC and discuss their contributions. I then specify limitations to this study and conclude with suggestions for future research.

In this study, I sought to understand the experience of Canadian diplomats on posting through the conceptual lens of ICC. I examined two research questions: *What challenges do Canadian diplomats face on post?* and *How do they communicatively manage these challenges?* I approached these questions using dialectics inspired by both relational dialectics and postmodernist traditions, and used Putnam et al.'s (2016) typology of responses to tensions to answer my second research question. I found that Canadian diplomats managed dialectical tensions at two levels: at individual and organizational levels. At the individual level, diplomats had to manage tensions between home-away, continuity-change, and social integration-social isolation. At the mission-level, tensions of privilege-disadvantage and individual autonomy-institutional structure shaped the relations between the CBS and the LES. Participants used all three types of responses to face these tensions: either-or, both-and, and more-than.

I would like to discuss three implications of my results, with regards to (1) ICC as an organizational concept, (2) ICC as a dialectical concept, and (3) ICC for diplomats. I begin by considering ICC as an organizational concept.

5.1 ICC and Organizations

I began this research quite influenced by the CAB model of ICC. Throughout the research design and data collection process, I assumed ICC was an individual skill and firmly

expected my results to corroborate this. My literature review illustrates this implicit assumption: I only dedicated a few paragraphs to studies investigating meso and macro levels of ICC. Yet, my results put emphasis on the value of considering ICC beyond the individual, as an organizational construct.

Indeed, GAC is precisely an example of how an organization can, by its very rules and functioning, facilitate or complexify its members' individual enactment of ICC. Throughout the individual and mission-level dialectics, participants cited multiple ways in which GAC's structure, rules and procedures shaped their experience abroad: from the design of their rotational postings (e.g., posting length, hardship ratings, cross-posting regulations, mandatory return to Ottawa, pre-departure training) to the security restrictions and the hierarchical structure of the missions. If we understand ICC solely as an individual skill that can be learnt and trained, we neglect to consider how organizational context can be or not be conducive to the enactment of ICC: we place the pressure to demonstrate competent performance and blame inadequate performance squarely on the individual and remove it from the organization. Unfortunately, this has been the main direction taken by the scientific literature on ICC: the solution to expatriate assignment failure has been enhanced personnel selection and training strategies, and not in structural organizational reform. Thus, I argue that organizational ICC merits to be examined in further detail.

Few scholars have attempted to conceptualize organizational ICC (Chen & Du, 2014 are a notable exception). Other scholars have theorized related individual concepts at the organizational level, such as cultural intelligence (Ang & Inkpen, 2008; Moon, 2010), communication competence (Jablin & Sias, 2001) and multicultural competence (Keršienė & Savanevičienė, 2005). Interesting parallels can be drawn from the conceptualizations at the organizational level of these parallel traditionally individual concepts, which my results corroborate: level multiplicity and level interdependence.

First, my results underline the multiplicity of levels of ICC in an organization. In my study, I found dialectics interplayed at both individual and organizational levels. This coincides with other researchers' findings on analogous concepts. In their ecological model of organizational communication competence, Jablin and Sias (2001) argue for four levels of analysis: the exosystem, the macrosystem, the mesosystem and the microsystem (p. 19). Chen and Du (2014) propose that three levels of ICC should be examined in an organization: the individual, the group/team, and the organizational level, while Keršienė and Savanevičienė (2005) focused their attention on the relationship between the individual and the organizational level.

Closely related to the multiplicity of levels, is the premise that the levels are closely interrelated and influence each other (Chen & Du, 2014; Jablin & Sias, 2001). This is what Jablin and Sias (2001) term the “dynamic interdependence” (p. 4) between the levels of analysis, that is, that “communication competence at any particular level of analysis influences, and is influenced by, competence at the other levels of analysis” (p. 17). Thus, it is important to understand how the levels are linked to each other (Chen & Du, 2014; Jablin & Sias, 2001). Chen and Du (2014) argue that individual and organizational levels are related through top-down and bottom up dynamics. For example, in a top-down dynamic, organizations guide individual ICC through their organizational values, policies, and resource allocations (p. 91). Likewise, individuals can contribute to organizational ICC as active participants of organizational functioning. One example would be individual knowledge reaching management and being “incorporated in decision making and policy” (p. 91).

My results provide insight into the relationship between individual and organizational levels by illustrating both bottom-up and top-down dynamics at GAC. For instance, I have evidenced how the competent management of dialectical tensions at the individual level improves the overall functioning of the mission (bottom-up). Moreover, my results also

highlight how GAC's structure, policies and overall functioning impedes individual display of ICC (top-down). This coincides with Jablin and Sias' (2001) claim that organizational routines, which are "the normative rules and processes that set the possibilities for acting in the organization [...] enable organizational members to enact a wide variety of communicative performances" (p. 10). My findings underscore that organizational routines can also *prevent* organizational members from enacting communicative performances.

These characteristics of organizational ICC are represented in Figures 4 and 5 below. Figure 4 represents the conceptual levels of ICC in the organization. Scholars (Chen & Du, 2014; Jablin & Sias, 2001) have argued for the existence of three levels, while my findings particularly underscore the interdependence of two levels (organizational and individual). I represented all three levels in Figure 4. The arrows represent the top-down and bottom-up dynamics of ICC between the levels. Figure 5 represents the levels of ICC I have identified at GAC. At GAC, institutional policy dictates the functioning of the mission and structures individual autonomy (top-down dynamic), while individual and mission communicative effectiveness and appropriateness reflect GAC's ICC (bottom-up dynamic).

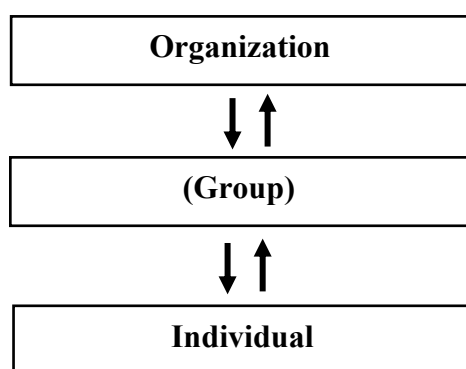


Figure 4
Conceptual Levels of ICC in Organizations

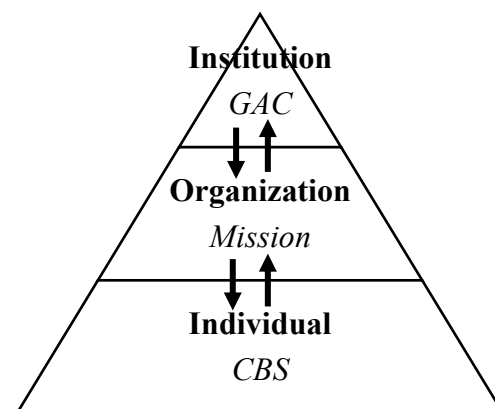


Figure 5
Organizational Levels of ICC at GAC

Furthermore, I propose one additional characteristic of organizational ICC. From a dialectical perspective I suggest organizations must manage an inherent tension between the

two elements of competence: *effectiveness* and *appropriateness*. That is, a tension exists between goal-oriented (effective) management, and process-oriented (appropriate) management, where inappropriate organizational management of this tension places stress on the organizational members' ability to enact ICC at the individual level. At GAC for example, we have seen that in the missions the CBS must balance Canadian work ethics and productivity standards with appropriate management of the LES. This is a source of stress, as remarked one participant:

That's what drove me crazy. It was so hard to get things done. But somehow things had to get done, and that was a source of stress. **Because I felt we were held to Canadian standards**, but we were working in an environment where things happened at the last minute, things cancelled at the last minute or confirmed at the last minute or... [...] **And I found that really really difficult to try to produce according to Canadian standards.**

GAC's institutional discourse which promotes respectful interactions with the communities it works with contradicts its institutional practice which expects employee effectiveness. This exemplifies the effectiveness-appropriateness tension. In this, it is telling that the CFSI's mandatory pre-departure training course is titled *Intercultural Effectiveness* and not *Intercultural Competence* (Global Affairs Canada, 2014b).

Let us then consider what would competence resemble at the organizational level. Following our understanding of ICC as multilevel, I propose that top-down ICC might be found in the organizational enactment of solutions to individual-level challenges and tensions. In other words, I argue that organizational ICC is enacted in the ways organizations lessen the individual burden of managing organizational paradoxes. My results precisely illustrate one scenario where the opposite occurs and individuals carry the burden of managing

organizational-level paradoxes: I have previously described how GAC's policy and design of the mission structure hinder individual agency to respond to tensions. Moreover, I also suggest that organizational tensions are best managed when responses are coordinated at multiple levels. My results illustrated one instance of this when both GAC and the CBS responded to inter-group conflict with *discussion*. The next section examines the implications of my results for the dialectics of ICC.

5.2 ICC and Dialectics

This research is the first, to my knowledge, to study ICC through the perspective of dialectics, as suggested by Martin and Nakayama (1999, 2010, 2015). If we understand the challenge of intercultural communication in expatriation in terms of contradictory dialectics, it follows that ICC is reflected in the competent management of these contradictions. Spitzberg (1993) reached a similar conclusion in his dialectical conceptualization of interpersonal competence: "how such paradoxes and dialectics are managed will have a significant impact on any success that relational partners hope to achieve," he writes (p. 153), without elaborating any further, however.

Thus, we must ask ourselves: what is the competent management of contradiction? Applying Putnam et al.'s (2016) response typology to ICC might give us the beginning of an answer. As we have seen, the authors classify responses to contradictions in three categories: either-or, both-and, and more-than approaches. However, these response types promote outcomes of unequal sustainability. For instance, either-or responses "exacerbate stress," "result in loss of organizational synergy," and "fuel vicious cycles" (p. 123). Both-and responses are useful short-term by "aid[ing] in developing awareness of paradoxes," providing "quick reactions in crisis situations" and "temporary actions for meeting immediate needs" (p.

128) but are not the most effective for managing long-term paradoxes. Finally, more-than approaches are the most effective long-term, by opening-up “meanings to enhance a discursive consciousness of paradoxical tensions” (p.130). As such, I propose that responses can be placed on a continuum from less sustainable to more sustainable. Then, the competent individual would tend to manage tensions with more sustainable responses (Figure 6).

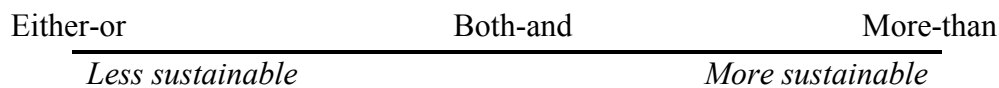


Figure 6
Sustainability of Responses to Contradiction

Moreover, I understand *praxis* to mediate competence in responding to the dialectical tensions and paradoxes of ICC. According to Putnam et al. (2016), praxis is the individual’s “awareness or consciousness of contradictions and paradoxes” (p. 82). It “entails being reflexive about actions and interactions; analyzing and penetrating tension-producing structures and experiences; and making choices to call into question, respond, and move forward amid contradictions and tensions” (p. 82). Furthermore, this “consciousness emanates in felt experiences, self-monitoring of behavioral patterns, recognition of clashes in actions, and understanding the nature of tensions in an organizational field” (p. 82).

Putnam et al. (2016) have already linked praxis to the effective response to dialectics. They write:

a constitutive approach makes praxis the fundamental objective in helping actors respond effectively to paradoxes [...] [Praxis] focuses on developing a discursive consciousness—a type of awareness in which actors can formulate in thought and words what is happening and reflect on why and how it occurs. Thus, the constitutive view aims to help actors become self-monitors, reflect on their experiences in paradoxical situations, recognize power struggles, and move from individual to collective

consciousness. Through moving discourse out of the shadows of paradox research into the foreground, organizational actors can engage contradictory forces through reflexivity and dialogic practices. (p. 132)

Other scholars have linked praxis to intercultural communication (e.g., Corbett, 1996; Sorrells, 2010, 2014; Sorrells & Nakagawa, 2008). For example, Sorrells (2014) reconceptualizes intercultural competence through the concept of *intercultural praxis*. The author defines intercultural praxis as “a process of critical, reflective, engaged thinking and acting that enables us to navigate the complex, contradictory, and challenging intercultural spaces we inhabit interpersonally, communally, and globally” (p. 153). She specifies:

Intercultural praxis operates as informed and engaged communicative action, suffused with an understanding of the positionality and standpoint of the communicators, whose resources include intercultural knowledge, insight, and wisdom that opens onto a rich and diverse ensemble of interactional choices. (p. 153)

In her Intercultural Praxis Model, inquiry, framing, positioning, dialogue, reflection and action are all points of entry to intercultural competence through praxis.

In linking these two perspectives, I rethink praxis as the mediator to competent management of the dialectics of ICC. In other words, I understand *praxis* to enable individuals to move from less sustainable either-or responses to more long-term more-than management of paradox through the creative development of responses. The role of praxis in the creative development of responses is especially evident in my study, for example, in participants’ management of the home-away dialectic. From separation (either-or) to transcendence (more-than), creative meanings of home emerged from reflection on the discomfort caused by the tension. In the continuity-change dialectic, reflection on the meaning of personal integrity guided the participant’s responses to the tension (balance, both-and). Moreover, in managing

CBS-LES relations, difficulty grasping the nature of and managing unequal power relations led participants to the adopt unsustainable defensive mechanisms. Thus, I argue that praxis allows individuals to enact more competent responses to dialectics. Importantly, this understanding of competence underscores the *dynamic* process of learning to become competent: one in which competence is not fixed, but where praxis guides personal learning. I will now examine the implications of my results for ICC and diplomacy.

5.3 ICC and Diplomacy

This research is, to my knowledge, the first to examine the ICC in the context of diplomatic postings. My results contribute to our understanding of the challenges that diplomats face in expatriation. I conclude that two catalyzing elements distinguish them from ‘traditional’ work expatriates: the repeated nature of their expatriation (rotationality), and their institutional/organizational situation in expatriation.

My results do not evidence significant differences between diplomats and ‘traditional’ expatriates in terms of the intercultural interpersonal challenges faced in adapting abroad, which included, among other things, navigating the cultural gap and the linguistic barrier. Besides, while participants did also mention cultural interpersonal challenges (e.g., instances of miscommunication), most (though not all) seemed to navigate intercultural relating with ease.

However, rather than dialectics of interpersonal relating, my findings do particularly highlight the broader *experiential* challenges (dialectics) for the diplomat, ones that come with extended and multiple expatriations. For instance, both the dialectics of home-away and continuity-change emerge over multiple postings. From this, I suggest that there is value in expanding our understanding of ICC on a temporal scale. That is, we should consider ICC

beyond the scale of the intercultural encounter (micro-time scale), and consider wider life/personal considerations in expatriation (meso/macro-time scale). The present relational interest in ICC could be understood as micro-level, and the broader life-long considerations of ICC as meso or macro-level.

Thus, my findings contribute to the literature on organizations and ICC, dialectics and ICC, and diplomats and ICC.

I have argued that more attention should be placed on studying ICC at the organizational level. Furthermore, my results underscore the multiplicity and interrelatedness of levels of ICC in an organization, specifically between the individual and the organization. My findings show that not only do levels influence each other in both top-down and bottom-up dynamics, but that organizational policy, structure and routines can both enable and hamper ICC at the individual level (top-down dynamics). Thus, the competent organization lessens, at the organizational level (through policy, for example), the burden of individual management of paradox. Moreover, I suggest that tensions are best managed when responses to tensions are coordinated at multiple levels. Finally, I argue that from a dialectical perspective of ICC, organizations must manage the inherent tension between effectiveness and appropriateness.

On the dialectics of ICC, I have proposed that ICC is enacted in the competent management of contradiction: where responses vary in sustainability, the competent individual favors sustainable responses. In addition, by enabling individuals to creatively develop responses to paradox, I suggested that praxis mediates the competent management of the dialectics of ICC. Lastly, I have argued that the repeated expatriation (the rotational system) and the institutional situation of diplomats fundamentally distinguish them from ‘traditional’ work expatriates. And, as the individual-level dialectics I identified particularly highlight

broader experiential dialectics rather than dialectics of intercultural encounters and relating, I suggested that ICC be examined in more detail beyond the micro-timeline (that of the intercultural encounter), on a meso-timeline (the personal dialectics of ICC throughout multiple adaptations). In this last section before I conclude, I share practical recommendations for GAC to improve its support of its diplomats on post.

5.4 Organizational ICC at GAC: Practical Recommendations

As I have argued previously, organizations should focus on the design of competent *organizational* strategies to facilitate employees' ICC. GAC understands ICC as an individual skill, but neglects that organizational ICC can promote or hinder individual ICC: while diplomats are expected to perform interculturally, GAC, as an institution, often struggles. In this section, I offer some practical recommendations for how GAC can improve its support of its posted CBS. I both relay participants' suggestions and provide personal recommendations. They are divided in three sets: recommendations for pre-departure, on-post and returning home.

5.4.1 Pre-departure

These recommendations focus on ways GAC can better prepare its employees to posting. To remedy the CBS' frequent lack of managerial experience, one participant suggested that the CFSI provide intercultural *management* and leadership training with a focus on conflict resolution. Moreover, to improve the mandatory Pre-departure Intercultural Effectiveness Course provided by the CFSI's Centre for Intercultural Learning, participants have suggested the following: (1) That GAC put in contact CBS about to be posted and CBS returning from post, providing the opportunity for sharing of experiences and best practices; (2) That the course focus on managing pre-departure expectations, particularly expectations of easy adaptation in countries with a small perceived cultural gap and no expected linguistic barrier;

(3) That a section of training focus on the specifics of multilateral environments for employees posted to multilateral missions.

5.4.2 On post

These recommendations highlight ways in which GAC can better support the diplomats on post. Participants who had a mentor from the Mission upon arrival described the experience as extremely beneficial to their adaptation. However, it seems not all Missions have mentorship programs for newly arrived CBS. Thus, GAC should consider generalizing the program to all Missions. Additionally, participants with previous managerial experience—and particularly an intercultural management experience—reported having an easier time managing employees. Thus, I suggest GAC give CBS the opportunity to gather managerial experience in Ottawa before sending them on their first posting.

On post, the inter-group power relations between the LES and the CBS seem to stem from ambiguity about the nature of the mission's cultural environment. Certainly, the mission is a hybrid of both Canadian work-culture and the local work culture. We have seen that the two cultures are unequally represented in the mission: the host culture and Canadian culture compete in dynamics of and resistance to power, where Canadian culture has the upper hand. However, the dominance of Canadian culture does not stem from formal policy. Rather, it stems from its structural superiority in the organizational hierarchy, that is, because the CBS have a higher organizational status. Lack of formal guidelines on the mission's operating work culture leaves room for contestation and resistance to the status quo by the LES. I argue that a clear guideline from GAC on this front would clear the friction which stems from this ambiguity. Moreover, GAC could also consider loosening the rules concerning LES disciplinary measures.

Finally, the CIL does offer an Intercultural Effectiveness course for LES. However, it is only available to LES “who are in Canada on area-specific training” (Global Affairs Canada, 2014c). If we understand ICC as a relational concept, then for fruitful collaboration to occur, both parties (LES and CBS) must be communicatively competent. Yet, many LES never travel to Canada and thus do not have access to the course. Therefore, I recommend the course be made available to LES directly in the Mission in which they work.

5.4.3 Returning home

Lastly, GAC could better support its employees returning home. Participants described how unexpectedly difficult returning “home” was. While GAC does offer help when going abroad, some participants deplored the lack of practical material support on return to Canada. To quote one participant:

Many of the things that you would find very useful in re-adaptation are things that the government will not provide. Find a doctor: the department’s not gonna help you do that. Get an OHIP card: the department’s not gonna help you do that. [...] Those sort of things [of] practical adaptation.

To facilitate reinsertion into Canadian society, I suggest GAC offer reinforced logistical support to returning employees. In addition, the CFSI offers “Reintegration Workshops for Personnel Returning from Missions in Fragile States” (fragile states include Afghanistan, Haïti, Sudan and South Sudan). The workshops are described as follows:

The challenges are as great upon return home as during an international assignment. It is critical for returning professionals to have an opportunity to assess the value of their experience in personal and professional terms and to share strategies on how to manage a smooth re-entry into their work and society. These workshops also provide an opportunity for organizations to learn lessons from returning personnel, to increase

future program or mission effectiveness and to improve their operational framework.

(Global Affairs Canada, 2014d, para. 1)

I argue this training would be beneficial to all returning CBS and should be made available to all (if not mandatory), whether they return from a “fragile state” or not. I now wrap up this thesis by presenting its limits and suggesting avenues for future research.

5.5 Conclusion

This research has left me with a greater appreciation for diplomatic work, which should certainly not be simply reduced to caviar-eating and champagne-sipping. This project has also led me to reminisce and reflect on my own experience as a diplobrat. As we have seen, repeated expatriation exposes the individual to a series of personal challenges, including estrangement from “home,” loss of a sense of personal integrity, and social isolation both at home and abroad. As it turns out, these categories describe quite accurately my personal experience. My results also highlight that dependents are effectively members of the diplomatic institution, at least in so far as their lives are also impacted by GAC’s policies. As the completion of this thesis also coincides with the end of my official status as a ‘dependent’ at GAC, I must admit its writing has been a particularly cathartic experience.

5.5.1 Limitations

I acknowledge the following limitations of my thesis. First, I did not interview diplomats who had returned early from a posting, that is, diplomats who weren’t able to competently manage the intercultural tensions. This leaves out interesting insight into the challenges of diplomatic expatriation. Another very important caveat is that I did not interview any LES. Thus, I only collected a partial account of the intercultural communication challenges

in Canadian missions abroad. This is a particularly relevant limitation when analysing power relations: I have only gathered the perspective of the privileged group to paint a picture of the overall relations in the mission. Lastly, I did not interview dependents of diplomats of posting. Research has shown that dependent adaptation is linked to the diplomat's successful adaptation. This leaves us in the dark regarding the impact of organizational ICC on dependent adaptation.

5.5.2 Future Research

At the same time, this thesis has opened up multiple venues for further research. Specifically, it has highlighted the value of examining the plurality of life experiences in expatriation beyond that of the business expatriate. For instance, future research could examine intercultural challenges faced abroad by the members of the military. Studying the military could also give us interesting insight into organizational ICC in a critical institution. Moreover, the experience of dependents such as spouses and "army-brats" merits further exploration.

Future research should also examine intercultural challenges faced in *multilateral* missions and delegations (for instance, at the UN or the OECD), where one could expect enacting ICC to be more challenging because of the multiplicity of cultures working together. Finally, my research has highlighted the value of considering ICC on a meso-timeline. Future research could go beyond short-term ICC and further examine the medium and long-term management of the challenges of expatriation.

As Ernest Hemingway, a notable expatriate himself, wrote in his 1926 novel *The Sun Also Rises*: "You're an expatriate. You've lost touch with the soil" (Chapter 12, para. 47). The diplomats I interviewed for this thesis could certainly relate to this sentiment. At least in this respect, diplomats and other expatriates share a common challenge.

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Appendix A: Types of Canadian Missions

Office type	Head of Mission	Location & Services	Example
Embassy	Ambassador	Located in the capital city of another country. Provides a full range of services, including consular services.	Embassy of Canada to the United States, in Washington
High Commission	High Commissioner	Located in the capital city of a Commonwealth country. Provides a full range of services, including consular services.	High Commission of Canada in the United Kingdom, in London
Permanent Mission	Ambassador	Located in a city where a major international organization is headquartered.	Permanent Delegation of Canada to the OECD, in Paris (France)
Consulate General	Consul General	Located in a major city that is not a capital city. Most consulates general provide a full range of services, including consular services.	Consulate General of Canada in São Paulo (Brazil)
Consulate	Consul	Similar to a consulate general but not all consulates offer a full range of consular services.	Consulate of Canada in Munich (Germany)
Consular Agency	Consular Agent	Located in a non-capital city. All agencies provide limited consular services.	Consular Agency of Canada in Acapulco (Mexico)
Honorary Consulate	Honorary consul	Located in either a capital or non-capital city. Most provide consular services, however there are some exceptions.	Honorary Consulate of Canada in Asunción (Paraguay)
Office	Head of Office	Located in either a capital or a non-capital city. Offices provide limited consular services and are designated as either an "Office of the Canadian Embassy" or an "Office of the High Commission," depending on the nature of the supervising mission. Generally, offices are established for specific work in support of Canada's foreign aid program.	Office of the Embassy of Canada to Slovakia, in Bratislava

(Adapted from Global Affairs Canada, 2019c)

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Introduction

- Is this your first posting? / How many postings have you done, how long have they lasted, and where were they?
- When did you arrive at your current post?
- How long does your current posting last?

About the job

- Can you tell me a little a little bit more about your job on post? What are your responsibilities? What does a typical workday on post look like for you?
- What are some of the challenges you face on the job? Do you have specific examples/anecdotes to share?
- What are some of the intercultural challenges you face on the job? Do you have specific examples/anecdotes to share?

About everyday life on post

- Can you tell me a little bit about life on post? How was the adaptation process for you? Was anything surprising? Do you have specific examples/anecdotes to share?
- How do you find things now, after X months in the country?

About the preparations for posting

- How did you prepare for this posting?
- About the pre-departure training:
 - Have you found it useful? / How has it helped you on post?
 - Would you have a recommendation on how it could be improved?

Conclusion

- If you had to do it again, is there anything you would do differently? Is there anything you would do again?
- What advice would you give to a new diplomat who is about to go on his/her first posting?
- Is there anything else relevant to your experience that we haven't talked about that you would like to mention?